THE LUXURY OF CHILDREN
AND SOME OTHER LUXURIES

BY EDWARD SANDFORD MARTIN



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EASTER-TIME

THE LUXURY OF CHILDREN

& SOME OTHER LUXURIES

BY

EDWARD SANDFORD MARTIN

AUTHOR OF
"WINDFALLS OF OBSERVATION" "LUCID INTERVALS"
"A LITTLE BROTHER OF THE RICH"
"POEMS AND VERSES"

ILLUSTRATED BY
SARAH S. STILWELL



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ERNEST HASKELL

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THE LUXURY OF CHILDREN



THE LUXURY OF CHILDREN



I DON'T know of any aspect in which Earth appears to better advantage than as a playground for small children. They like it, literally, "down to the ground," and they are willing to take it just as it is. If improvements are thrown in, so much the better, but they are not great sticklers for improvements. They like fences because they are good to climb; they like to have the grass cut sometimes, because haycocks are good to tumble over; they like flowers, but very simple flowers will answer very well; they like the seashore—sand, sea-weed, starfish, shells, surf, still water—but all they ask is that it shall be accessible. They don't insist on having style and society thrown in. They beat most of us grown-ups in adaptability—in taking





what they can get and making the most of it. Their experience is so limited that they are not critical, and their imaginations are so active that a very moderate material basis gives them all the foundation they need for fairy-land.

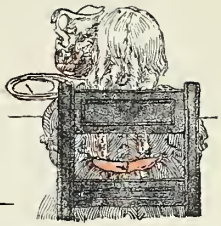


They have the advantage of their elders in that the real business of life with them is play. The time they devote to it does not have to be saved up from working-hours. They have all the time there is for play except what is needed for eating, which is a pleasant exercise; for sleeping, which also has its attractive points; and for getting washed and dressed from time to time, which is endurable if kept within reasonable limits. And when they play heartily and cheerfully, they are doing well their share of the business of life.

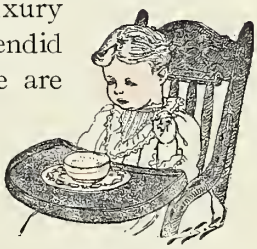


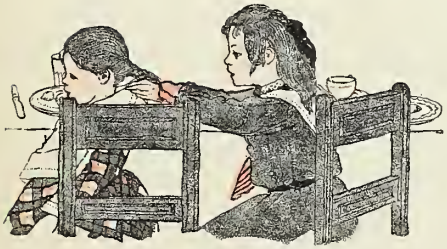
Most children like flowers; but some children love them. It was one of the merits of a child I know, when she was still a very little girl, that she loved flowers as unaffectedly as any grown-up person with a garden. She

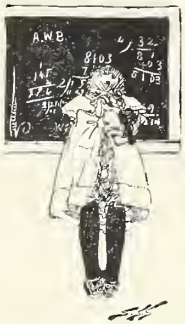




never had much of a garden—worse luck—but she could be happy for hours together in a plain clover-field, with red-top and white-top clover, buttercups, and flowery weeds. Flowers seemed to have things to say to her, and she never lost a chance to hear them. She does not remember, as I do, how her grandmother, summer morning after summer morning, used to sally out in sunbonnet and the simplest of garb and spend the earliest hours of each new day in her flower-garden. For threescore years and ten Blandina's grandmother loved flowers with all the fidelity of a strong and gentle spirit, and they seemed to return her affection, for they lived and grew and blossomed for her, as they only do for their true lovers. I think I know how Blandina came by her friendship for flowers, and I have no doubt that, when she gets around to it, she too will have a garden in which flowers will grow for love. Well, that is one of the luxuries of life. It is too rare a luxury in this country. Our rich people have splendid gardens, of course, but our poorer people are







less disposed as yet to raise simple flowers about their dwellings than the English are. Where you find the door-yard of a working-man's cottage abloom with flowers there is apt to be some old-country training—English, Scotch, or German — behind it. To be sure, that is by no means an invariable rule; but flowers are the outcome of a settled life and of a more or less contemplative spirit, and we Americans are rather a restless lot as yet, and bent on "getting on," and much disposed to devote our efforts to the cultivation of the main chance, and to put off our gardening until we can hire some one to do it for us.



They say, indeed, that we are so devoted to the main chance that we neglect not merely to raise flowers, but to raise enough children. Surely in so far as that is true we are showing ourselves to be a self-denying race. Are second-best things of so much moment to us that we deny ourselves best things in order to acquire them? If we are going without children in order to acquire the necessa-





ries of life, there is much to be said for our discretion; but if it is luxuries that you are after, what luxury is comparable to the luxury of having all the children that you want?

Not many Americans who might have children forego that happiness altogether. Some exceptional married people don't want children at all, because they would interfere with habits of life to which these might-be parents have grown accustomed and attached. So much the worse for them. But they are rare people. An overwhelming majority of Americans who marry want children, and the only ground for criticising them as parents is that they don't want quite as many as they should. Aspiring for themselves, they are aspiring for their children too. They are loath to be loaded down with large families which might make life too hard for them, and they hesitate to take responsibility for more children than they are confident of being able to start in life with a full set of "advantages." People who have found existence a struggle, and good at that price, are less daunted by the idea of







bringing children into the world to struggle than people are who have had an easier time. We Americans of this generation have had a comparatively easy time of it, and want our children to have an easier time still. That is well enough, if we don't carry it too far; but, apparently, we do carry it rather too far, and between our careful thought for our own ease and our solicitude for posterity, our families tend to be too small. Solicitude for posterity has gone too far when existence has been denied to a possible citizen for fear he may never be able to own a steam-yacht. And solicitude for our own comfort has gone too far when it has kept down to two what should have been a family of four or five children, because five children are too many to take to Europe. Let Europe wait. To raise five good children is better than Europe. Five good children are an immense luxury, and to deny one's self other luxuries in order to raise them is not self-denial at all, but merely an intelligent choice of investment. With all our prudence we are usually ready to stretch a point to in-







dulge ourselves in a luxury that we covet. Then let us think of children more as luxuries and somewhat less as objects of expense.

For what other interests are comparable to the interests that centre in children? People who have had money in banks say that it is a pleasant sensation. People who have had children in school know that that is better still. Do you doubt it? Which will you do, then: will you take children out of school to keep money in the bank, or take money out of the bank to keep children in school? Almost invariably you keep the children in school, because that is better fun and promises bigger returns. There is no sort of objection to a simultaneous experience of both of these forms of gratification. They go very well together. But if a choice must be made between them, what sort of a person is it that hesitates?



Collectors have fun of a certain sort. They buy pictures and porcelains and tapestries, and more or less beautiful works of art, and get them together and gloat over them. Their





properties engage their thoughts, interest them in art studies, bend their faculties to the pursuit of bargains, and undoubtedly add entertainment to life. Some collectors have so much money that they can maintain families and collections too. A good many others are childless, and have to bring grace and beauty into their lives by what means they may. But any collector who stints himself in the matter of children in order to enlarge his accumulation of objects of art is all kinds of an unwise person, and any collector who has children and things and loves both is vastly more concerned about the future of his children than even about what his things will finally bring at auction. An auction is all that collecting finally comes to, whereas to raise a family is to make a bid for a perpetual share in the interests of mankind.



Consider too the pursuit of ordinary social pleasures by persons of leisure, which is held to be so exceptionally diverting that many well-to-do people are said to avoid family cares and responsibilities in order to chase it the





harder. Geraldine is a nice girl, very good-looking, on the right side of twenty-five—whichever side that is—and of a stimulating and unexpected turn of mind that makes her excellent company. She has a first-rate time when circumstances are favorable, and she gives her mind to it. When she was in New York last winter diversions pressed upon her so continuously that it was a question how she could find time to get her beauty-sleep and rest her nerves. You may not know it, but the maintenance of a vivacious demeanor and freshness of appearance is something of a tax on the system. To have good spirits and a serene temper, to look nice, to make one's engagements maintain a proper sequence without conflicting or overlapping, and to keep one's admiring friends in a contented frame, call for careful discretion and the exercise of a good deal of diplomatic talent. From New York Geraldine went to California, and the newspapers said she had a very good time there, too. She ought to have had, for I consider her a very hard-working young woman,







as well as clever. Having Geraldine's kind of a good time is an interesting experience, and worth some trouble to acquire, but it seems to me that in the long run it is a bootless sort of effort. Suppose Geraldine goes on having a good time until she is thirty. She will have spent a lot of strength and skill, and what will she have to show for it? Will she have acquired anything that will make life more interesting to her at thirty-five—at forty-five—at seventy? I hope she will; but if she doesn't, so much the worse for her.

There is a good deal of drudgery about getting married and raising a family, but you have something to show for it. The work has great compensations as it goes along, and if it is well done it has unrivalled and continuous interests in store; whereas the good times you have had with contemporary playmates, though they have a certain value in retrospect, do not constitute a very substantial basis for future happiness. The sort of happiness that is stable is based on a succession of thoughts and occupations, each one of

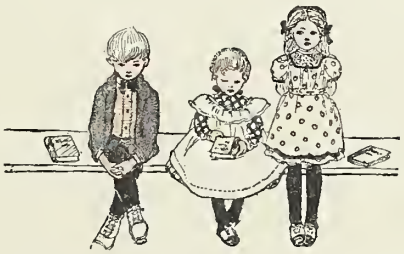




which is apt to be of trifling consequence in itself. It is a matter of the routine of daily life, of the atmosphere one lives in, of hourly tasks, problems, and realizations. It is in its ability to provide these continuous interests in a wholesome fashion that domestic life beats the life of society. Once is not enough to live on Earth. To get experience and live by it is good as far as it goes, but you don't get all that ought to be coming to you unless you can live again in your children, and pass along some of your experience to them. To be sure, the transmission of the fruits of experience can only be imperfectly accomplished, but the impulse to do it is strong, and the effort to do it is immensely interesting, and should be, for it is by that process of transmission, imperfect as it is, that society progresses.



This is a luxurious generation in America. The appetite for luxury is enormous, and the expenditure for its satisfaction is so vast that statisticians are ashamed to compute it. Let us consider the attractions of some rival lux-





uries of the less expensive sort. It costs about a thousand dollars a year to keep a boy in a good boarding-school. You pay the school seven or eight hundred dollars, and there are clothes to buy and some annual repairs to be made on the boy by doctors and dentists, and food and lodging to be supplied in vacation time, and— Oh, if you are an indulgent parent and have the money, and count in everything, the annual bill for the boy may run up to twelve hundred dollars. It costs about as much as that to keep a victoria in town. Perhaps, with good management, you might keep one horse and one man and a carriage or two throughout the year for twelve hundred dollars, but if you kept them in or near New York, your management would have to be careful. But in one way or another you could get a fairly ample provision of carriage exercise for the cost of maintaining a boy in a good school. Your wife—of course it is she who would take most of the carriage exercise—could make all her calls comfortably, instead of taking street-car risks in her best







clothes. When you went out to dinner you could go in a cab—which is so much the best way that many worthy people think it the only way — and sometimes, in the spring, when the weather invited, your wife would take you to drive late in the afternoon in the Park. That is an excellent thing to do in the spring in New York. Let us not disparage carriage exercise, for it has its very good points. But it is not indispensable. It is a luxury. Inadequate as the means of public transportation are in New York, you can get about in the street-cars, or afoot, and if you can choose your time it may be done fairly comfortably. If you have a carriage you save some time and some strength, and gain in ease and enjoyment, but lose some exercise which might be good for you. Any one in the course of an afternoon stroll in New York can count up a hundred stout ladies riding about in victorias, who would really be better off, and less stout, and more active mentally, if they had to exert themselves more, and get about on foot and in the street-cars.







THE LUXURY OF CHILDREN

Like as not some of them think it a greater luxury to have a victoria than to have a boy at school, but that is only because they are used to the victoria and do not happen to have a boy. For consider what profit there is in having a boy at a good boarding-school. You are interested in the boy to start with. When he goes to school you become interested in the school, and incidentally in all schools for boys. You get letters from the boy, and they are so few as to be much appreciated. He usually skimps them, and when he writes a good one it is an event. You get a report of his scholarship every month. If it is good, you rejoice; if it is bad, you lament, and stir him up to greater exertions. Either way you have the benefit of your emotions. Gradually you get to know more or less about all the boys that your boy knows, and contract personal acquaintance with some of them, so that you soon have an intelligent and extended personal interest in the rising generation. The boy comes home for the Christmas holidays and again in the spring, bringing









new and stirring elements into the family life, bringing other boys to the house, bringing new tales and impressions to the family talk, adding new turns of language to the family vocabulary, acting in various ways like a lump of fresh yeast in the family dough. You have the use of the boy all summer, besides, and at the end of the year—if he is the right sort of a boy, and is at the right sort of a school—he is better and more valuable and more entertaining than he was at the beginning. Does your victoria bring you in returns comparable with these? Of course it doesn't. If you are going in for luxury and have to choose between a victoria and a boy, take the boy.

And, of course, enjoyment of a school-boy isn't dependent on the ability to spend seven or eight hundred dollars a year on his schooling. The point about that is that for eight hundred dollars a year, or some such sum, you can buy for your boy the very best schooling that is in the market. Money cannot buy any better, for schooling is a commodity the





value of which is very imperfectly measured by money. The laws of demand and supply have only limited effect in determining the price of the best grades of it. Indeed, you may send your boy to a public school and pay nothing, and get—if it happens to be a good one—excellent instruction, and some valuable experiences which no private school could quite match. It is a pleasure to spend money on a boy if you have it, and if you think you are giving him "advantages" which are really advantageous, but a boy that costs a hundred dollars a year, or less, may be just as satisfying a luxury to his parents as a boy who costs a hundred dollars a month. The point is that if you have an income reasonably well adapted to the standard of living which you affect, and want all the luxuries you can afford, it will pay you to have some school-boys.



So it is as to girls, only more so. It is pretty generally though not universally held that the best place for a boy is a good boarding-school, but if you live in a town where the schools are good, public sentiment will sustain





you in keeping your girls at home and sending them to day-schools. No family that is addicted to luxury should omit to supply itself duly with school-girls. Nice ones are so very nice—such an adornment to any premises; so pleasant to walk with and to joke with; so stimulating to read to! To get out a good, old story that you may not have read for thirty years, and read it aloud to your own school-girls, is like opening the past at a pleasant place and living it over. It is excellent sport to live over the past when you can choose the places. The story you read must be a good story or it won't go. But take—say *Ivanhoe: Ivanhoe* and a couple of school-girl listeners will insure you a pleasant half-hour after dinner for as much as three weeks. It is a great luxury to be able to count on daily half-hours that, barring accidents, will be pleasant. You can do it if you have the right sort of school-girls in the house, and improve the reasonable possibilities of the situation.



And, of course, as your school-boy brings you into touch with a lot of boys, your school-girls





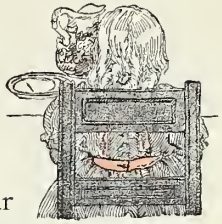
make you know more or less about the girls they are thrown with. You get to know their acquaintances, and have your preferences among them. Then you probably try to make your girls' preferences coincide with yours. There will be girls whom you will want them to like, and other girls whom you would prefer to have them like less, and an astute and fortunate parent you will be if your preferences are reflected in theirs. In the long run the social tastes of intelligent parents are usually inherited by intelligent children. Both, in the end, will be apt to like the same sort of people for the same sort of reasons, but the capacity for selection is based on observation and experience, and it takes time to develop it. Selection may be influenced but it can hardly be forced. How is a school-girl to know what girls she likes until she has tried various sorts? That is one of the things she goes to school for, to form her taste in friends, and very interesting the process is as it unfolds.





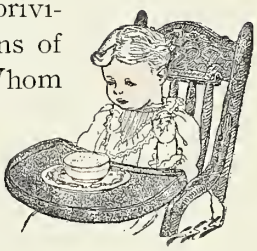
There is nobody in the world that in the

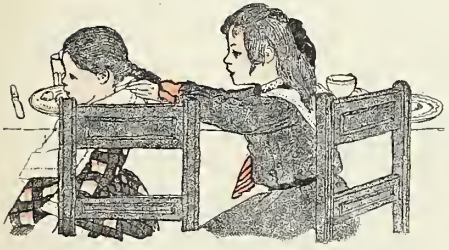




long run is so good for us to live with as our own children. Several families of good people may share the same dwelling and live in peace. Unattached people who are congenial may join forces and share expenses and get on well. Lonely people may hire companions; impecunious people may band together, with or without friction, and do better in combination than they could do separately. And, of course, people can, and do, live in boarding-houses and hotels and justify that arrangement. But for choice, almost every family prefers to live its own separate life in its own separate dwelling. That is the ideal way, and it matters not so very much whether the dwelling is great or small, dear or cheap, provided it is healthy and the life that goes on within it is well ordered and harmonious.

For any one to be able to choose a group of people out of the various millions on the earth as those with whom he would prefer to live, and live with them, seems a momentous privilege. Yet it is a privilege which millions of people in ordinary circumstances enjoy. Whom







would I live with if I had my choice? With Mr. Kipling, Mr. Dooley, President Roosevelt, and the Emperor William? These strenuous gentlemen would make an interesting company. The talk would be good; but, after all, they would not be my choice. My preference would be to live with Jonas, Clementine, Blandina, and their mother. I am more interested in them than in other people; their purposes in life fit in better with mine, and habit has made them more tolerant of my company than other folks would be. I like my own best to live with, and you like yours, and Jones and Smith like theirs. We all have our choice, and live most with the people we like best, giving praise to our Maker that natural affections, which are comparatively easy to command, should be so incomparably desirable.







SOME CHILDREN IN PARTICULAR



It is not the custom in our family to return thanks after food, but seven-year-old Blandina, who is very deliberate about taking her simple nourishment, is apt, when she has finished what has been set before her and taken off her bib, to get down from her chair and kiss both her parents. Such a demonstration has never been expected, much less exacted, from Blandina. It is an impulse from within —the outward sign of replenished energies and of a prompt and instinctive appreciation of the blessings of this life.

Those blessings Blandina has always appreciated. She has always been glad to be alive. She wakes in the morning benignly disposed towards all creation. She is glad when it is breakfast-time, glad to go to school,





glad to come home, glad to get her luncheon, glad, after lunch, to go to the park, or to shop, or to read or play at home, or to do anything that comes handy. And when the gas is lighted, and the hour for bread-and-milk and dropped eggs comes around, she greets those restoratives with enthusiasm. It cannot truthfully be said of her that she is glad to go to bed. Usually she goes with reluctance and sometimes with tears; but once abed, her pleasant impressions of existence reassert themselves, her philosophy returns, and the current of her affections resumes its course. Somehow, Blandina's affections seem to be always in commission. She is a person of considerable wilfulness, not without temper, not at all indifferent to getting her full share of any good thing that may be in course of distribution. Her tears flow readily and often, but dry incredibly soon. There never was a child more appreciative of the pleasures of consolation. I suppose that if she were analyzed by a competent hand the report would note traces of jealousy







and selfishness. Nevertheless, she has the great charms of repose and good-will. The repose comes from the capacity to be satisfied with favorable conditions for a considerable period at a time. When she has been duly wound up she goes steadily until she runs down. The good-will is an accident of birth. Blandina was born comfortable in mind and body, and affectionately disposed towards mankind and all nature. She looks always with interest into the world's mirror and sees pleasant things there. That is the gold spoon in her baby mouth. That is what makes her blunt nose, with all its freckles, seem an advantageous feature. That is what makes her more valuable as a mundane possession than a pretty big bunch of bonds with gilt on their edges and coupons attached. The coupons only come off the bonds twice a year, but the interest on Blandina accrues by the hour, and the payments are generous and constant.



The disgruntled person who thought that life might be tolerable if it were not for its





pleasures was unable, probably, to command the simple and profitable form of satisfaction which comes from living in the house with a nice child. To be sure, *one* nice child is a scant allowance. At least five is preferable, if one can find keep and education for so many. Jason Jackson, of Boston, who loves all sports, and searches life's pockets for pleasures, appreciates children with a man's irresponsible joy, and loves to have them about in all stages of growth. It was he who admitted, with a new baby in his lap, that he liked to have always one nice, soft one in the house. All properly constituted parents share that liking, though it is a very exceptional family nowadays that lives persistently up to its preferences in this particular. It is the disposition of all the world in these days to run to town; and town life, full of distractions and elaborations, and calculations and costs, undoubtedly favors small families. The possession of great treasures inevitably involves cares, and mothers remember, even if fathers forget, that children don't grow up as they should with-







FEEDING THE CHICKENS



out thought being taken for them. One child is a more anxious charge than two or three, but more children than two or three means more care, and it is possible that of care there may be an over-supply. Then, too, the distribution of living space in cities is not at all sensible. The rule ought to be that the largest families should have the largest houses. The rule is, with due exceptions to prove it, that the size of one's domicile is in inverse proportion to the size of one's family. That is because the more of the family income goes for food, clothes, and schooling the less remains for rent. The world is full of just such rules invented for the confusion of parents. Nevertheless, though there are folks to whom children are a trial, and to whom a certain scale of living, and strawberries in March, and the opera, and timely journeys, and various privileges of an unencumbered life, are worth more than young faces at the breakfast-table and kisses at bedtime, the general conclusion of mankind is that nice children are God's best gift.





THE LUXURY OF CHILDREN



Some persons of a superior virtue live childless in the married state and love one another, and keep the peace, and find interests in life that afford them due entertainment; but the success which they make in living—when they do make it—is the triumph of character over circumstances, and it takes superior virtue to compass it. We should always admire and respect such persons as beings superior to their fate, and, conversely, we would seem entitled to think rather small potatoes of married people who, with children to help them, don't manage to live harmonious. In the case of such a couple it is pretty safe to conclude that about one or the other of them there is something very much amiss, since with the greatest luxury in life vouchsafed to them they cannot profit by it.

To have a family and no means of support is a serious predicament, and it is not bettered by the fact that the family is large. A family with a bad physical or mental inheritance, or in the hands of incompetent parents, is not likely to be a blessing or a valuable asset in





the world. But a family of well-born children, committed to parents who appreciate their charge and are equal to it, is one of the very best things going. The very best and most important thing in the world is folks. Without them the world would be a mere point in space, and of no account except as a balance weight. All that ails the world as it is is a shortage of folks of the right quality. Of everything else there is enough to go around. Consequently, the most valuable gift that can come to earth through man is rightly constituted children. Beside them all other forms of wealth are defective. Money is an excellent thing in so far as it enables one to command health and power and education and opportunity, and promotes one's usefulness, but children are a power and an unceasing entertainment, and constitute usefulness immediate and prospective. While money tempts to idleness, children are an incentive to industry; where money makes for self-indulgence, children make for self-denial; where money is an aid to vagrancy, children neces-







sitate a home and some adherence to it. Money in superfluous quantities is a recognized demoralizer, but every good child is a moralizer to its parents. Can there be any question, then, that to accumulate a reasonable number of children is better worth one's while than to accumulate an unreasonable amount of money? Not a bit; and yet the world is full of ignorants whose ideal of the condition of happiness is to have a very large fortune and a very small family. To such persons to raise more than two children seems a flight in the face of Providence and a reckless preference for the poor-house as the refuge of one's declining days. Great is prudence; but it is worth remembering that there are chances of raising too few children as well as too many, and while it is an embarrassment to have a young family on one's hands and run out of funds, it is also an embarrassment to find one's self past middle life and fairly in funds but short of children. The man who has exercised such discretion as to reach the age of fifty without having any children to







fall back on has probably, if he has any sense, passed the period when he admires his own prudence, and has come to think of himself as one who has wasted his opportunities.

We are amiss in that we don't think of children as wealth. Our minds are apt to dwell unduly on the cost of raising them and starting them in the world and not enough on the profit of them. We speak of Jenkins as "a poor man with a very large family," as though a man with a large family could justly be regarded as poor, provided the family was of good quality. Jenkins has only six or seven children, and can feed and clothe and love them all, and sends them to school, and has fun with them—thanks to his having a very able wife. We also speak of Disbrow as a rich man with one daughter, as though a man with much money and only one daughter could justly be called rich. We are not very accurate in our use of language. If a man who has valuables is rich, Jenkins is very well off, and we should recognize it in our thoughts of him; whereas a man with much money and







only one daughter is but one step removed from want.

Excessively rich people rarely raise large families nowadays, and there are good reasons for it. They haven't time, for one thing. Conscientious parents, be they rich or poor, don't want to neglect their children or to turn them over entirely to hired supervision. You might almost as well not have children as not live with them and be bothered with them. But six or seven children constitute for many years almost a complete occupation for a mother, and women who can command the various exercises that money can buy are loath to spend too large a share of their lives in the service of childhood. You can't take a troop of children abroad in the spring, to Newport in the summer, to Lenox in the fall, to New York in the winter, and to Florida in February. They have to go to school, for one thing; and, for another, it isn't healthy for them to keep them on the road. Any travelling circus-man will tell you that it's hard to keep the menagerie cubs alive while









the show is moving. There's no place for children like almost any plain home where the plumbing is safe and the water can be boiled, and where you think your doctor knows the milkman. But if you are going to stay at home, there's no special point about being egregiously rich; so the families of the extremely opulent as a general thing are small. Another thing: where there is a fortune of one hundred and fifty millions or more, it always seems a pity to split it into more than two or three pieces. It is well enough as endowments after the division, but it is spoiled as a curiosity. When a collection of money has been made so nearly complete that it approaches the condition of being a phenomenon, there is a natural reluctance on the owner's part to cut it up into mere incidents. Accordingly, the incalculably rich do not, as a rule, care for a large group of heirs; one or two answer as well as a dozen. As far as raising a large family goes, a man with only two or three millions is better off than though he were really opulent, for if he has ten children he





can provide for them all, and educate them, and give them a handsome start in life, and still have enough left to live and die on and make his widow happy. The idea of being "worth" a hundred and fifty millions, and raising as large a family as such a fortune would warrant, is not a practical idea, albeit it is a dream of a grand family.



The interminable variety in children has its good points and its disadvantages. If they were more alike they would be less interesting, but it would be more nearly possible to feel that a family was sometimes complete. But the possibilities of heredity are inexhaustible. One child inherits this or that from its mother and something else from its father, and another in selecting the composite qualities in which it is to clothe itself may skip its parents altogether and go back to grandparents or forebears still more remote. This lends an interminable excitement to the rearing of families. The certainty that no new-comer will be a duplicate of any child in being stirs in the optimist thoughts of combinations of





powers and perfections the development of which it would be a life-long delight to watch. The records of some younger children, late-comers in large families, who have been born with great endowments and turned out to be great people, must always be an aggravation to ambitious parents whose families are small. To know of whole series of wonders which have been accomplished by seventh sons is disconcerting to folks to whom a seventh son is an impossible luxury; but they may always comfort themselves by remembering that a small family well raised is more likely to rejoice its parents than a big one neglected.



But that introduces the question of what a good bringing-up consists in. As to that, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. We will all agree that children should learn to read and write and speak the truth; that it is good for them to love and be loved; that they ought not to be so snowed under with what are called "advantages" as to stifle their natural development; that the aim of education is to bring out the good and the





strength there is in the child, and not to shape it by main strength according to some preconceived idea of parent or teacher.

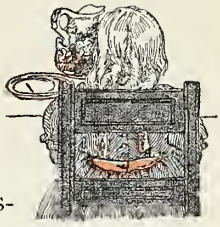


The people who are of most account in the world are the people who work. We certainly do not want our children to grow up into do-nothings. We want them to learn to work as hard and as successfully as possible. We want them also to be good, and to keep out of mischief, and to be pleasant. We want them, if possible, to be so trained as to be able to work advantageously at things whereof the pursuit is agreeable and stimulating, and which bring rich rewards to successful labor.



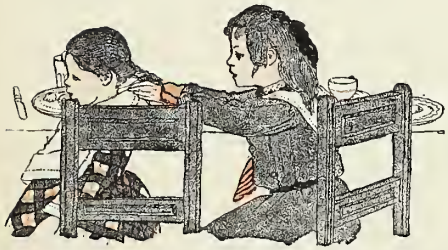
We shall not be content with a development of mind or of body which the heart does not share. If our children are successful solely for themselves, and not for us, too, and for others as well, we shall not feel entirely proud of their raising. We all feel, though, that the common lot is not quite good enough for our children. We hope for them that they may not drudge interminably at weary tasks. We

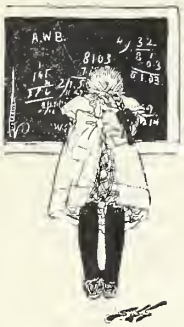




want to command for them the brighter aspects of life. We cannot be sure of accomplishing that, but if we are wise enough, and not too selfish or too lazy ourselves, we can do a good deal towards it. Unworthy people who are shrewd and selfish and unscrupulous get a good deal in this world that is rated as valuable, but, after all, the use that they are able to make of what they get depends upon what they are. We want our children to grow up to be such persons that ill-fortune, if they meet with it, will bring out strength in them, and that good-fortune will not trip them up, but make them winners. To fight the battle of life under hard conditions and fall on the field is not inglorious, but to be turned loose in fields that are white, and gather no satisfying harvest, ah! that is a sad fate. We should try by all means to save our children from that. One may miss most of the comforts of life and still succeed, but to have good chances and waste them all is failure.







OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN



It has come to be usual when there is a great procession to bring out the boys of the public schools and make them a part of it. Their uniforms are incomplete. They don't carry weapons, or, if they do, the weapons add nothing to the effect. They march, usually, pretty well, but there is very little pomp or panoply about them. They are placed far down the line, near its latter end, and if the procession is a long one they don't come into view until the eyes are more or less wearied with watching the long succession of regiments and military organizations which form the more brilliant part of the show. And yet when the school-boys come along in their belated turn there is a notable quickening in the interest of the spectators. Far





down the line you hear cheering, vigorous and strong, from crowds that a moment before had seemed jaded. "What's that?" You lean forward and look down the street. "Oh! the school-boys are coming!" And when they come, proud, intent, heads up, eyes to the front, and their best foot forward, you cheer, too, and if you stop it is because you have to set your teeth to keep your tears back. A lot of boys; lots and lots of boys in marching ranks! That's all. What ails you? What stirs you? What is there so moving about all these urchins? You don't know. You only know that you always have sensations in the throat when the school-boys go by, and have to wink and swallow to keep from being too visibly affected. You see other persons using like measures of restraint. There's nothing sad about the boys; they are in dead earnest, that is all. Yet their youth touches us wonderfully. They are the Future, incarnate, devoted. They march to dooms of which we know a little more than they, but of which neither we nor they know much. What bat-







tles are ahead for them! What decimations, recurring and inevitable, wait for those devoted legions! But they have no misgivings. The great horn throbs; the bugle shrills; in step with drum-beats on goes boyhood marching where God wills.

These are other people's children that we have been watching. *Our* boys, maybe, are off at school. Our girls are looking out of yonder window. All this emotion and disturbance and pride have been, not over individual children, but over childhood. When we are asked if we like children, we are used to say that it depends upon the child; that we like some children, just as we like some grown persons, and others we don't like, or like less. That is true, but it isn't the whole truth, for children as children do appeal to most of us in a way that grown-ups don't. We feel towards all children something of paternal solicitude. An instinct prompts us to protect the young, and in most of us it is stronger than our nerves, our tempers, or our fears. The pains and distresses that befall children







and which we can't help, we don't want to know about. When grown-ups die, it is the common lot, and we don't grieve unless we have personal reasons. But a child's death that seems uncalled for hurts us. When a child is lost we search the newspapers till we read that it has been found. When a child is stolen, anywhere, the news, when it gets thoroughly around, excites the whole country. Of course we love children; our own best; other folk's children, too; preferring those who are most lovable, but more or less solicitous about all.



To people who have children of their own, other children are relatively interesting as members of the generation to which their children belong and factors in their children's development. They offer useful means of comparison. What I know of Johnny Green and William Carter, coevals of my Jonas, helps me to determine whether at this period of his development Jonas is getting in fair measure what ought to be coming to him. I compare his scholarship with theirs, his height, weight,





and physical stability, his energy, his manners, and his character. They are of his world, and his place in it is going to be determined in the long-run by the relation his qualifications bear to theirs and those of their like. I trust I am not inordinately ambitious for Jonas, but I want him to have his due, and I know he won't get it unless somehow he can manage to demonstrate that it is his. If William Carter is able and industrious enough to lead the class, Jonas and I don't propose to grudge him that distinction. If Johnny Green can outwrestle his fellows, Jonas in a cheerful spirit will contribute a fall to his list of victories. But so far as any influence of mine with Jonas can effect it, they shall both work faithfully for their distinction. That leaders should lead, that superior parts should gain superior rewards, is essential to progress. That is a part of the great scheme whereof the millennium is to be the ultimate result, and it is not for us to dispute its wisdom. The competition that develops leadership, discernment, resolution, and other precious







qualities is perfectly healthy, and ought to be sweet-tempered and wholesome. To make the best of one's self is to show appreciation of the handiwork of one's Maker. If William's best is better than Jonas's, it will help Jonas by stimulating his efforts; and Jonas, in turn, if he crowds William hard, will keep him well up to his pace. This is one of the great services that other folk's children do us. They help us get out of our children what is in them. We could hardly do it without them. A Ruskin may grow up solitary and leave a great name. We can be thankful for what he gave the world and yet suspect that with wiser rearing he would have given it still more. Our children need companionship, the stimulation that comes from good-humored rivalry, the stress of such a generous combat as is suited to their years. Competition carried to an extreme is ugly. Where there are not necessaries enough to go around, finer natures will contend, not to see who shall have the most, but the least. But in this competition of children pursuing strength and knowledge the store is







boundless, and the more of it the leader gets, the more will each one get who competes with him.

When the human disposition to take thought for the future goes beyond the care for personal necessities and becomes a solicitude for mankind in general, the scriptural injunction in restraint of it doesn't apply. Nothing is going to break men—the best men—of their interest in the future. The natural human craving for immortality, which is bred of the obvious incompleteness of life on earth, enters into it. We lay up money—some of us do—against the future, and don't give over doing it for all that we know what a dubious rampart it is, and how uncertain is the fate of savings when the thrifty hand that gathered them lets go. In our day and in our country the great cause for which money is most willingly poured out by bequest or by living hands is the training of the young. The feeling is that what makes better people makes a better world and a better future. Givers, though innumerable objects appeal to them, give most





bountifully to education and to what concerns the training of the young. It would not be incomprehensible if the great money-makers should say, "Knowledge is power; health is power; let us make them scarce that our descendants, having both, may have the greater advantage." That would be selfishly provident in a certain way, even though it would be short-sighted. But our givers follow no such reasoning. They leave, indeed, accumulated money to the exclusive use of their descendants for better or worse. Many of them strive while they live to monopolize certain means and processes of money-making, but they don't try to build up monopolies in knowledge or in health. They were men before they were monopolists. They are men to the end. All children seem to be theirs. For all children, for all youth, they strive to open the paths to usefulness and all its rewards. That the fit shall come to their own, that the less fit shall improve, that genius shall not lack its tools nor industry its opportunity—these things are more to them than the chances or







mischances of their remote descendants. "I have earned my advantage," says one; "why shouldn't I profit by it? But I want the next generation to have as fair a chance as I have had."

We have heirs of our bodies and heirs of our minds and spirits. The truest heirs of the strong man are they whom his spirit quickens. They may be of his blood, they may not—but they are to take up his work, and for them he does well to take thought If a man has children, the farther he looks into the future the more diffused is the thin stream of blood that has passed through his veins and the slighter the relationship that his descendants bear to him. If he looks far enough ahead, the progeny of his progeny blend into the general mass of mankind, and he sees in himself merely a unit of the world that is and a progenitor of the world that is to be. By as much as his relationship to prospective individuals grows less important to him, his relationship to the general mass of coming men should grow more important. No man, be







he ever so great or ever so strong, can be sure that his line will not run out, or that any kind of sceptre or any accumulation of wealth that he may hand down will not pass out of his descendants' hands. But he can be reasonably sure that all lives will not run out, and that what he does on the earth that is worth doing will last and some one will fall heir to it. If he leaves anything worth inheriting he will have heirs. They may be his children, but they are almost as likely to be other people's children. His impulse, if he has it, to provide for childhood and for youth in general is sound and natural, for, after all, it is the expression of his desire that his own shall come to their own.

But all this is a good way from home. The other people's children that interest us parents most violently are those that our children are, or are to be, thrown with. We ought to wish that our children may be thrown with children on whom, by their fine graces of character, they may have an improving effect. We ought to send our children out like little







missionaries into a world that is to profit by their companionship. I have not observed that parents live up very generally to this honorable aspiration. Incidentally, it may be accomplished, but the more usual disposition is to take thought, not so much as to whose children our children can most benefit, but what children they can most profit by. Very nice children indeed, well-mannered, well-trained, sweet-tempered, and intelligent, are the sort we prefer as our children's companions, and especially as companions for our girls. We seem more solicitous, if possible, that our charges should get grace by association than impart it. That seems greedy, but it is at least a compliment to other parents. What is our test of schools? Do we study the list of courses and inquire diligently as to the capacity of teachers? To some extent we do, but much more we judge them by their fruits.



Clementine is getting old and expects to swap schools next year, and hasn't made up her mind yet which of several seminaries for







girls is to have her valuable patronage. We are investigating the subject, she and I. We do it chiefly in the morning just before nine o'clock, as we walk down Fifth Avenue to the school she goes to now. Every morning we meet squads of the pupils of the other schools, and observe them with unfailing interest. Their comeliness, the modishness of their raiment, their health, spirits, manners—nothing about them fails to receive our attention. We even note how many of them come in cabs and how many drive their own carts. Our idea is that schools are best known by their fruits, and though appearances are deceitful and don't always indicate flavor, still, looks and demeanor certainly count for something. I can't find that the desire to improve either her mind or her companions has much weight with Clementine. What she is looking for is the best lot of girls, according to her standards; and even that is subordinate to her intention to go, if possible, to the same school that Gertrude goes to. Gertrude is some one else's child, and goes to Clementine's





present school, and Clementine enjoys her society.

As for Blandina, she knows where she is going. There is not and has not been the least uncertainty. *All* Miss Adams's girls may come to school in carts. Miss Bacon's girls may be ever so nice, and Miss Bacon's vogue ever so sweeping, Blandina is to go neither to Miss Adams's nor to Miss Bacon's. She is going to Miss Camp's. It is a graded school, and graded schools don't suit all girls. It hasn't been necessary to consider whether they especially suit Blandina, because any good school seems to suit Blandina.



Camilla Drayton has not been to school at all yet, so far as I have heard, not even to dancing-school. She is an only child, and is being carefully reared. She has a governess. They don't let her ride in the street-cars for fear she will catch something. They seem to want her to have measles, whooping-cough, chicken-pox, German measles, mumps, and the other things, after she is grown up and can appreciate them better. Well, she is an





attractive person, and it is sad to think she has so many experiences ahead of her.

In our family we have had everything but small-pox and scarlet-fever, and those we hope to avoid. To have got through measles and whooping-cough is like having paid-up life-insurance. It is surprising that some of the parents of other people's children should be at so much pains to avoid experiencing so agreeable a sensation. It seems to me that Camilla's mother is too distrustful of the common lot, and over-solicitous to avoid what happens to be in the air. If she is, she has merely fallen into an error that few mothers of only children are able to avoid. They want their darlings to learn to swim, but prefer that they shall learn in the bath-tub at home. Competition, and the wisdom that comes from attrition with one's coevals, are doubtless less indispensable to girls than to boys. A boy who is to make his own way must learn to know and deal with other boys. With a girl's success, competition has less to do. Instinct and native grace and mother-







ing do more for her. She may accomplish her destiny without any very wide experience of other girls. And yet her dealings with other people's children will be unlucky indeed if there is not a great deal more of profit in it than of loss. It should yield her friendships, and a girl's friendships for girls are affairs of great moment, or else story-writers are mistaken. It should develop her discriminations, too. How is a girl to learn the true inwardness of girls, or which she likes and which she doesn't like, and why, unless she is thrown with them? How else than by personal investigation is she to gather the wisdom about femininity which is to be so useful to her daughters, and her sons, when she has them?



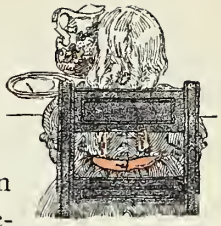


Children in families where there are other children get on better without other people's children than only children do, but even they need other people's children for their development. The elder children in families are apt to assume such authority as they may over the younger ones, and the younger ones are





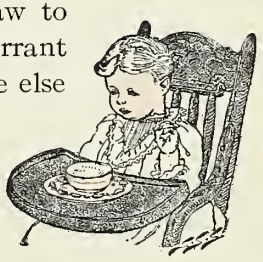
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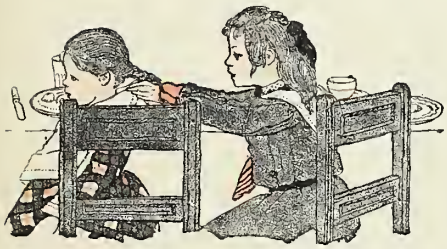


apt to dispute it, and it isn't an uncommon thing for sisters to quarrel. That is not necessarily a great matter. It does not imply lack of affection, but only the clashing of forces neither of which one would spare. But, of course, it may be overdone, and it is preferable that energy of this sort should not be too much developed in one's own household, and that both likes and dislikes should find some field for cultivation away from home. Excellent lessons of toleration, of live and let live, are to be learned by association with other folks' children.

"I have been surprised," says Aunt Matilda to Clementine's mother, "to see how well Clementine has hit it off with my Jane since she has been visiting us. They seemed to get on perfectly, and yet both Jane and Clementine have been thought to be rather 'bossy.'"

So they are, each in her own field. Both Jane and Clementine have younger sisters, and feel authorized to lay down the law to them when circumstances seem to warrant it. But laying down the law to any one else







than a younger sister is a different matter, and they instinctively feel the inexpediency of that. Yet they observe and reflect, and no beam that may be in their own eye is likely to be big enough to make them blind to the neighbor-child's mote.



"Mother," says Clementine, "you should have heard Jane talk to little Lucy. When Lucy turned in her chair at dinner to look out of the window, she said: 'Don't turn around in your chair at table. It isn't manners.' When Lucy helped herself to succotash, Jane said: 'Don't take so much. It isn't manners.' And yet when the dish came to her she took more than any one else. She kept after Lucy about something the whole time."

Yet this is the same twelve-year-old Clementine who has been so prone to harass nine-year-old Blandina with admonition and censure. Instruction as to her own faults has at least enabled Clementine to recognize, disapprove, and tolerate those faults in other children.





OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN

Older children will not wish to be always restricted to the company of younger ones, and younger children will find relief in consorting part of the time with their coevals, who cannot claim to know better than they do, nor assert an authority that is founded in a longer experience of life. There are advantages about being a younger child. Younger children escape mistakes of training from which older ones suffer, and they have usually a beaten path to follow which their elders had the trouble of making. But the beaten path is sometimes irksome, and the natural presumption of older children that the way they have learned is the best way is not always well founded. Be considerate of younger children. Take care that they are not run too invariably in the family groove, and that their power of initiative is not governed out of them. If they are obstreperous, and show a disposition to be the architects of their own fortunes and to break their own paths, remember what a superfluity of guidance they are apt to have. However great the solici-







tude they excite at home, and however much affection and kindness they give and take there, for them the field is a little fairer and a little better for their development when the children in it are other people's children and the terms are equal.







PARENTS



It is a theory in our family that discipline is a maternal function. It found expression the other night when we were playing whist. As we cut for a new deal the clock struck eight, and eight o'clock still being bedtime in our family, all three children furtively looked around at their mother, who lay on the sofa with her eyes closed. Then it was that one of the family maxims first clothed itself in language. Some one said, softly, "Let a sleeping mother lie!" and the new deal proceeded.

We have realized the existence of that maxim for years past, and lived up to it so far as it promoted our own comfort. It would be a good deal more to our credit if we had practised it more thoroughly and unselfishly. Un-





happily, the sleeping mother in our abode lies undisturbed just about so long as it better suits the aims and purposes of the younger members of the family to let her rest. When Clementine wants to know, she can't wait; and when Jonas teases Blandina beyond the very moderate limits of her patience, Blandina retorts with due outcries, and if Discipline happens to be dozing, it has to rouse itself and supervene. How fierce it is! How excoriating in censure! How adamantine in injunction! Oh, a real lion!—lo the claws and the tawny mane and terrifying eyes! Nothing less could reduce Jonas's vociferous defence to tearful and somewhat injured meekness, and drive Blandina to the sugar-bowl for solace, and make Clementine careless for the moment whether she knew or not. Poor children, to be caged with so fierce a creature! And yet they are fairly efficient tamers. Look at them all, in the same cage, half an hour later. What! That a lion that they are all sitting on at once? That creature fierce? That a tawny mane? No, no! A fleece, a







woolly fleece; and yet—odd phenomenon—the creature doesn't bleat, she purrs.

Almost any kind of a parent will do at a pinch, except a liar. If we are exceptionally commendable persons, as people go, so much the better for our children, for like not only breeds like, but trains like, and "good father, good child," is a fairly reliable rule, though "good mother, good child," is a somewhat surer one. But even if we are not notably exemplary, we may hope to get along as parents if only we are honest. We may as well make up our minds in the first place that in so far as we are reproduced in our children, and in so far as we influence them, it is what we really are that is reproduced and that has influence, and not what we pretend to be. Judicious grafting and training do some curious feats. Families of figs—somewhat prickly, but still figs—are sometimes raised from what seems thistle stock. In such cases it will be found that there was more fig in the stock than appeared, or else that the young shoots fell into very good hands and had ex-







cellent culture, or else that the parent thistles themselves yearned sincerely to be figs, and tried to, and transmitted their aspirations and the fruits of their efforts. But parents who are thistles at heart, and in intention and practice, won't raise figs merely by cloaking their true inwardness with occasional fig leaves. Like begets like. Gentleness is not induced by stormy exhortation, nor manners by precept alone. Conduct in children is the resultant of various forces of training, instinct, and imitation, and of the three the last is not the least.

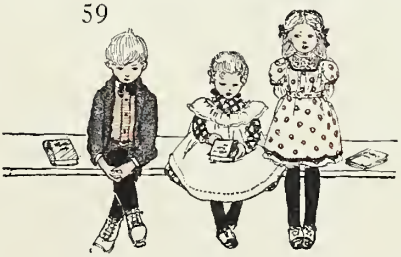
Every parent who allows himself the luxury of his children's society may expect to be imitated in such measure as each child approves. Such imitation is a form of obedience, even though it may accord very imperfectly with the word of the paternal command. When I set Jonas an example, I count with fair confidence on his appreciation of it. He will imitate me, not, perhaps, in my exemplary action, but in setting an example. He will set an example on fit occasion to Blandina





and Clementine, and the example he sets will bear about the same relation to the general line of conduct which his fallen nature prompts as the example I set does to mine. That is why I do not hold very closely to the Sunday school injunction to set good examples. With fairly clever children it cannot be trusted to work well. Their instinct of imitation is too quick and thorough. Unconsciously they pick up the parental hypocrisies and adopt them, and pass them along. I don't pretend not to subject myself to some reasonable restraints of conduct on account of Jonas and his sisters. They are all, for example, so intelligently critical as to quality in food that I try to restrain, when they are at the table, a propensity to grieve audibly if the plates are not hot or the soup lacks flavor. Even if Jonas feels as I do about hot plates and tasteless soup, I trust he will imitate my exemplary self-restraint, which is really too imperfect as yet to be more than moderately exemplary. I do not expect him to reproduce all my faults, for he has an intelligence







of his own, and discriminates, but I do expect him to discern and realize them. Many of them, with his mother's help, he has already been able to appreciate as faults, and I am glad to say that the more I fall into them, the more deplorable they seem to him, and the less inclined he is to adopt them. That propensity which I have of being a little behind the stroke of the clock, of which all the family —under maternal tuition—have come into so vivid and constant an appreciation, is really likely to be a blessing to Jonas, for he is by nature inclined that way himself, and observation of the ignominy and suffering that procrastination and dilatoriness bring upon me has strengthened a good deal in him the purpose to thwart his natural leaning towards these evils. So in the matter of the practice I follow occasionally of adding a suggestion of spirits to my water at dinner. I am not sure it is a commendable practice; neither is Jonas. He has a sensitive throat, and one of the finest natural gifts of abstemiousness I ever saw. I am somewhat less gifted in that







particular than he, and he watches my potations with mathematical attention, insisting, when I get more than two tablespoonfuls of whiskey at one sitting, that I am on the downward grade, and likely to come to grief. On the whole, it is probably more advantageous to Jonas that he should feel anxiety about my drinking habits than that I should be anxious about his. If I should set him an example by never drinking whiskey in his presence, I would deprive myself of the benefit of his valuable warnings, and he would lose whatever advantage there is for him in observing how little spirits a man may consume without becoming a teetotaler. What the parental example should be in this matter of drink is a good deal mooted. I trust my course may be blessed to Jonas, and if it isn't I shall be disappointed. At any rate, I am not sure that a course more didactically exemplary would be better, for some of the most deplorably thirsty persons I have ever grieved over have been the offspring of parents who were aggressively abstinent.







THE LUXURY OF CHILDREN

One of the comforting experiences that come to parents when they see the blemishes in their own deportment cropping out in their children is the thought that their redeeming features may also be reproduced. Each of us must be conscious of tendencies in himself which, if they had full swing, would take him to the poor-house or worse, or at least bring him into disfavor with society. The reason they haven't wrecked us is that counter-tendencies and obstinate compunctions that would not be denied have existed along with them. My hopes for the future usefulness of Jonas are largely based on the activity of his compunctions. He responds to appeal, and, if he is somewhat impatient of direction in matters of detail, he has fairly lucid ideas of his own about what it is expedient to accomplish, and how. The swift succession of his aspirations, and his propensity to be on with a new love before he seems fully justified in abandoning the old, would cause me more misgiving if I could not hope it was based on a rather un-









usual faculty for getting the available meat off most bones in exceptionally short time. If Jonas is to become a compendium of superficial and inaccurate knowledge—jack of all sciences, and master of none—it will truly be rather a sore fate, and he may never make as good a living as I hope he will. But, after all, he is growing up in a generation whose specialty promises to be the development of specialists, and perhaps a lad who reads a hundred different books in a hundred days, and has fifty violent interests annually in as many forms of amusement, will be pinned down soon enough to a dominant occupation. If Jonas is discursive, he is also energetic and aspiring, and by no means content to be satisfied with second best if his powers of attainment can readily do better. After all, there are a lot of things in the world that are worth tasting, and of a good many of them a taste is enough. Moreover, it is by tasting and subsequent comparisons that the eventual preference which we call taste is developed.

I hear it suggested in the family that Clem-





entine has no natural manners; that the instincts of grace are not as ready in her as they might be; that her communications tend to brusqueness; that her salutations are somewhat short and careless; and that when she condescends to blandishments they incline to be overwhelming. Nevertheless, there has never been any doubt in the family about the expediency of raising Clementine. She lives in a measure behind defences, but they are worth passing. If she is in any wise deficient in her courtesies to her own species, she makes up for it in lavishing attentions on dogs, cats, rabbits, squirrels, and horses. If she is somewhat chary of letting her affections go out overmuch, I suspect it is the protecting instinct that guards a nature that does nothing by halves. No member of our family is so tenacious of her preferences as Clementine. None of us loves clothes so much, or has such positive notions of the fashion of them; none of us has more advanced opinions about trimming hats, or deeper convictions about dressing hair. Curls are satisfactory to Clemen-







tine; braids are not. None of us is so obstinate in her detestations as she, or so candid in expressing them. Her likes and dislikes are serious matters. Just at this writing she is raising green shoots from an onion in a glass of water in the library window. It is a trial to the family. We all wish she were less attached to the onion, which is not handsome nor sweet-smelling, but Clementine's griefs are too heart-rending and too impervious to solace to be lightly incurred. It is quite well understood in the family by what inheritance she happened to be its most shy, erratic, helpful, and in some respects reliable member. She has in herself, more obviously than most of us, a warring community, whereof antagonistic members strive pretty constantly for the upperhand. But there is no tragedy about it, for she is equal to every conflict, even that which rages daily between her fatal gift of beauty and her contempt for soap.



Children are unquestionably useful to parents. So, as a rule, are parents to children.





THE LUXURY OF CHILDREN

To be sure, some babies are raised on bottles, colic notwithstanding, and some children cared for in institutions grow up to strength and usefulness. But persons who know most about institutions—even some of those who have the most to do with managing them—are agreed that it is distinctly to the advantage of children whose parents are at all tolerable to worry along with them. The use of mothers, particularly in early life, is rather more obvious than that of fathers. Children must be fed, clothed, washed, scolded, kissed; manners must be taught them; medicine must be put into, or kept out of, them; their health must be watched; they must be kept in or sent out judiciously, and presently their education must be seen to. The bulk of all this work falls on mothers. Fathers are consulted at times on such questions as what doctor or which school. In a good many families an appeal lies to the father in difficult cases of discipline. Fathers sympathize, advise, spoil, and provide, but it is remarkable how much a normal father, who has stood over the rais-









ing of several children, can manage not to know about the details of it. He may be a fair judge of results, and really an important contributor to the happiness of his family, but, unless he happens to be a doctor, what is his opinion worth about foods and their qualities, times, and amounts, or about what weight of clothing a given child needs by day, and what by night? Is the average father of any real use when a child is sick, except to amuse it, to encourage the mother, and to go on errands? The primary duty of the father of a young family is to go out daily and get an adequate supply of money. When he attends faithfully and successfully to that, it is considered that he has done well, and great, verily, is his reward. The other details of management fall to the mother.

Now mothering is a complicated matter, and to be good at it is a very pretty gift, and one not always as closely allied with other abilities as one might expect. Some good women are pretty bad mothers, and some women that are not nearly so exemplary are







good ones. Some obtuse women are good at raising children, and some very clever women are no better at it than institutions. There seems to be a good deal of animal instinct and animal capacity about it; and yet there is the same difference in various animals. I was never so much impressed with the difference in mothers as in viewing a collection of families of pug-dogs. "Here's a good mother," said their owner. "She always raises most of her puppies. That one's a poor mother. Hers are apt to come to grief." They all looked alike to me; but some had this talent for taking care of puppies and inducing them to grow up, and others hadn't. So it is with women. Mother-sense is a subtle matter. Some women lack it who have the most admirable theories about raising children, and the most outspoken views as to the errors and delinquencies of other mothers. Therefore, when you are looking for it, if you want to be particularly sagacious, look not at the mother, but at the children. The proof of the mothering lies in them; but even that







is not infallible, for sometimes a good deputy does wonders.

The apparent severity of some mothers has scandalized me a good deal. Their household laws are so Draconian, and the enforcement of them seems so relentless, that at times I am torn with sympathy for the children. But children seem to judge the maternal tree more by its fruit than its bark, and they have their compensations in kind. You usually find that the children of vociferous mothers talk back. The parental inwardness moves them more than the parental clamor. You may see soft-voiced women maintaining an easy but very effective discipline in their families by very gentle means.



Fathers, too, have their uses in families, uses besides that of providing. They are not so indispensable as mothers, but even in cases where the wage-earning usefulness of the father is not of vital moment, getting along without a father seems no better than a making the best of things which are not as they ought to be. Under present conditions in this world





we seem to need practising fathers up to the age of twenty-five or thirty, and consulting fathers for an indefinite space beyond that. It is remarkable over what a protracted period a proficient father who keeps himself in fairly good order can continue to be useful and generally popular in a family. Fathers who are unduly modest and disposed to underestimate their domestic value may often draw conclusions flattering to themselves from what they observe of the experience of fatherless families, and especially of fatherless boys. Indeed, it is universally admitted that there are not enough competent fathers to go around, and there are few that are competent, or seem so, on whom outside jobs of fathering are not pressed. Undoubtedly it is the duty of every father to do what he can to supplement the school-masters, doctors, ministers, and others on whom the protection and guidance of the fatherless devolve.



There is solace and reassurance for all parents in the thought of the large charity of children, and the allowances they make for





their parents' errors. Walking a chalk-line and posturing as a model of conduct is not easy even for a grown-up person. Parents who entertain the theory that it is their province always to appear to their children the embodiment of abstract right, cut out hard lines for themselves, and entertain ambitions doubtful in value, and still more doubtful of realization. Being godlike is a condition that doubtless has its justifications, but being tin-god-like yields neither sport nor emoluments. Much safer is the state of the erring parent who tries to shape his conduct so that it will bear reasonable scrutiny as it really is, and trusts to his children's love to make them tolerant of his defects. After all, love is the most indispensable element in the relation between parent and child. It is lucky it is so common, for raising families without it is hard work and ill done. The great detail in which parents most excel institutions in bringing up children is that they love them more.







STRONG POINTS OF INFANCY



The distinction of the human infant lies in his incapacity. So say our brethren learned in science, assuring us that man's strongest points are his excessive helplessness when he is a new baby, and the preposterous length of time it takes him to grow up. Mr. A. F. Chamberlain, who has written a book about *The Child*, gives a crowd of authorities for these assertions, and makes the reasons of them so plain that any of us can see for himself that they may be true. We know that "man begins life at the very bottom of the ladder, and crawls to maturity at a slower pace by far than any of the animal species." Instead of being like a colt, grown up at four and used up at twenty, he is barely grown up at twenty, but is good then for forty or





fifty years of service. It was John Fiske who pointed out that the protracted helplessness of children kept parents together for longer and longer periods in successive epochs, and led at last to permanent family relations. The human race would have perished, Rousseau declared, if man had not begun by being a child. "Easy come, easy go," seems to be a rule of biological development as well as of pecuniary enlargement. It was a scientific mistake to represent Minerva as springing complete from the head of Jove. It would have accorded better with human experience to make her perfection the fruit of an extra-long childhood. Whoever is impatient of childhood, of its helplessness at first, its long duration, the slow development of strength, judgment, and responsibility, let him ponder these matters and come to a better point of view. Childhood is an enormous expense to humanity, but not one minute of it, if we take the large view, is wasted. The expenditure on account of it is money invested, not squandered; time and pains put out at interest for







the future maintenance of humanity. Which are the strong nations of earth? Invariably those whose sons and daughters come slowest to maturity, and are best carried through the longest periods of infancy, childhood, and youth.

Not but that precocity is excusable in individuals. In the development of a race heredity will play many tricks, now and then putting an old head on young shoulders, and equipping some children with faculties so unusual that some of them must ripen early to make way for the development of the rest. By all means bring along the precocious children as rapidly as prudence permits, for no rule holds in all individual cases, and there is no certainty that the light that burns brightest at the start may not endure radiant to an end duly remote. But be thankful that all children are not precocious, for in races the rule holds, and quick development means a shallow soil, an early crop, and then sterility.

So childhood is not man's disability, but his opportunity, glorious and unmatched in



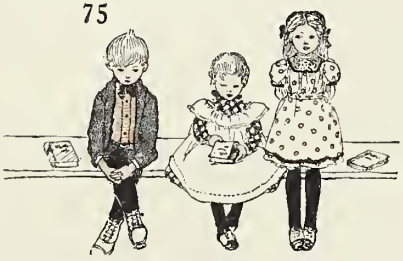


BREAKFAST



all creation. It is that that we need to realize and act upon. The biologists tell us that men are never so much like monkeys or monkeys so much like men as at the very beginnings of their respective lives. They trace all sorts of queer analogies between our babies and infant monkeys. One investigator, Dr. Louis Robinson, has remarked that brand-new human babies have a capacity for holding on with their hands which is out of all proportion to their strength in all other ways. Infants an hour old, it seems, can grasp a stick and support their weight by their arms for a quarter of a minute, and at two weeks old they can hang on in that fashion for about two minutes. That implies prodigious strength in the arms and fingers, considering the extreme helplessness in other directions of the creature who can't hold up its head or do anything with its legs. They tell us that this infantile capacity for hanging on has come down from a time when we were still monkeys and lived in trees. Then, babies that couldn't hang on for dear life to their mothers' hair, or a limb,







or anything clutchable, got an early fall, and never grew up. Those that did grow up handed down to their descendants this capacity for taking hold early and hard, and our babies still have the habit, though it is a long time now since human families have been raised in these parts in anything more tree-like than a tenement-house fire-escape. The scientists spin other tales about babies that are interesting, though possibly libellous. They insist that their heads at birth are shaped very like the heads of young monkeys, and that some of them show signs of a half-hearted and abortive early disposition towards tails. They hold, too, that the delight of a young infant to splash in a tub is the distant echo of a remote time when we were members of the alligator family, and took kindly to water at the earliest possible age. They say that the reason babies can't stand on their legs at first, and make such a protracted labor of learning to walk, is that standing erect and walking on the hind-legs is a latter-day accomplishment, and that if we took after our forebears







and walked naturally, we would still go on all-fours.

The upshot of all these imputations and deductions is that babies are very like little monkeys, and that we are least human when we are youngest. But by way of solace, and to save our self-conceit if that has suffered, they assure us that whereas the little monkeys grow less and less like humans every hour they grow, our babies turn their backs on the monkey type at the first squirm, and grow away from it hand over fist during the whole of their protracted period of development. The monkey child's strength runs to jaw and to length of limb, and to agility and monkey ways. The human child's nose asserts itself, his brain grows and grows, and insists on having room to expand in, and his skull takes shape accordingly. He finds his legs, and gradually puts them to use, though in some children strength comes to the legs very slowly. The learned doctors assure us, too, that the period of upward development in which the child grows more human all the







time, and keeps putting distance between himself and the monkeys, is in infancy and early youth, and that presently upward evolution stops, and development becomes "an adaptation to the environment without regard to upward zoological movement."

The deduction from all these learned revelations seems to be: Take care of the child, and the man will take care of himself. So long as the period continues which is most favorable to progress away from the monkey type, keep the infant on the run. Get all the monkey out of him you can. As to his body, encourage Nature in her disposition to work out the baby's human possibilities, by keeping him well. As to his mind, humanize it in every way you can. And take especial pains with the girl babies. They are the ones, Mr. Chamberlain says, that count the most. The child and the woman, we are assured, are the transmitters of evolution for the race. The woman, more childlike than man, is more important than he to future generations, though man unquestionably has







his uses and his value in the immediate present.



The practical advantage of this theory of monkey ancestry is that it helps us to realize what children have to get over, gives us increased patience with them, and especially with boys, and supports our confidence in the final triumph of the human traits even when they seem to lag. The drawbacks to it are that it flouts our self-conceit, and that it seems to abbreviate too much the evolutionary possibilities of each individual. It is grievous to be assured that we make our fastest progress away from monkeydom before we are born and in earliest infancy, and that our upward course is soon checked by the need of adapting ourselves to our environment. Never mind. Those theories apply more to the bones and the body than to the spirit and the mind. It is the weak point of the inferior races that their mental development stops very early, but very intelligent persons believe that in the best individuals of the best races it never stops at all. Their





view seems to be that compelling necessities of environment may and do check mental growth, as they are said to check physical evolution, but that if the environment is favorable enough, mental growth need not be halted. There was discussion of this matter recently between President G. Stanley Hall, of Clark University, and President Eliot. Dr. Hall held to the idea that there were stated periods in life during which, but hardly afterwards, certain kinds of knowledge could be assimilated to advantage. The season of development was soon past, he thought, and the time for organization succeeded it. But Dr. Eliot maintained that though men's powers are diminished by age, life is a progress, a growth, an expansion from beginning to end. Growth in most men is stopped, he thought, not by natural retrogression, but by the need of making a living.



There is solace for ambitious spirits in Dr. Eliot's opinions; and as for persons who don't want monkeys or monkey traits in the family, they are welcome to share the attitude of a





young person named Clementine, who says there is no warrant for the monkey proposition in Genesis, nor yet in Exodus, but explicit information in both those depositories to the contrary.







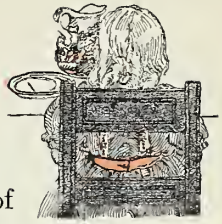
NAUGHTINESS



NAUGHTINESS in a child is a relative quantity and depends upon circumstances. Pretty much everything that concerns morals or ethics is relative. The first rule of conduct is, Do as you like. Any sort of conduct will pass uncriticised where there are no critics, but where there is society there must always be critics, and the first rule of conduct has had to be amended, for otherwise people could not live comfortably together. The process of amendment, which has been going on since the earliest times, is considered, in Christian countries, to have reached perfection in the golden rule. Theoretically, naughtiness in a child is deviation from the golden rule. Practically, it is deviation from the standard of conduct which the child's parents or elders consider proper for children.







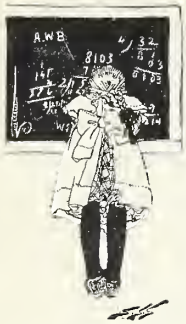
NAUGHTINESS

Now, parents and elders have all sorts of standards of conduct for children, and it very often happens that the standards of the two parents of a child are not in entire accord. Again, parents are subject to contraptions of temper and disorders of health, and often tolerate on one day conduct which they find reprehensible on the day following. Accordingly, naughtiness in a child consists, practically, in deviations from several imperfect and variable standards. This will seem discouraging if we do not consider that the natural, normal state of us all is a state of naughtiness, ameliorated by constant striving to be more nearly good.

In the case of most children there are things which the father considers naughty and the mother tolerates, and other things that the mother considers naughty and the father tolerates. The father and mother, if they are reasonably wise people, try to back each other up in reprehensions, and so to blend their standards that the child may find its course reasonably clear. But the best







they can do is apt to fall somewhat short of perfection. Happily, a child gets a great deal of training out of the atmosphere in which he lives. He learns language by hearing it spoken, and if what he hears is good language he learns to speak good language. If he grows up where good manners prevail, his manners will be apt to be good. The standard of conduct that is really effective in shaping the child's character is the standard that governs the people who govern him. Precepts may be ever so good, injunction ever so searching, but daily example is more effectual than either.



But as to naughtiness. It is a deviation, then, from the parents' or teachers' standards. And as infants are not born with standards of conduct ready made, ordinary naughtiness is a natural incident of training. The child is not born obedient. Teaching him the necessary measure of obedience is a gradual, experimental process, punctuated by deviations into disobedience, which are naughty. A child is not born truthful. On the contrary,





it is born weak, and deceit is the natural refuge of the weak. The training of the child in veracity is a process which may be expected to yield some lies, and lies are certainly naughty. Some children get by birth much more politeness than other children do. Manners and courtesy seem to come natural to some children, and are attained with difficulty, if at all, by others. The training of children in manners will, of course, result in the precipitation of much naughtiness, but that is all in the day's work, and is not a thing for parents to lose sleep over. Even when brothers or sisters in a family squabble, and are very slow in using one with another those graces of consideration and forbearance which are so necessary to harmonious living —even that should not make the solicitous parent despair. Man by nature is a contentious beast. He is born into a world in which even now many problems have to be settled by blows, and in which disputes never cease. To teach him gentleness is an exploit, and especially to teach him gentleness to his equals







or to persons smaller than himself, whom he does not fear. It is naughty for children to quarrel, but that is a form of naughtiness the immediate eradication of which is not to be expected, and in which it is enough if steady progress is made towards amiability and self-control.



The modern doctors, it seems, distinguish between two kinds of wrong-doing in children. Mere naughtiness which is a natural incident of training, they make little of, but there is an abnormal naughtiness that gives them deep concern. The normally naughty child responds to training, punishment, and restraint, and acquires self-control and good behavior, so that as he grows older he comes truly to years of discretion. His mind accepts the lessons that are offered it, and his conduct shapes itself accordingly. But the abnormally naughty child does not profit by experience. He does not learn that certain lines of conduct are inexpedient and avoid them. He avoids them only so long as the effects of punishment are vividly remembered or he is





under effectual restraint, and when the pressure of restraint relaxes, back he falls into evil-doing. The naughty child of this abnormal type is in danger of growing up to be a criminal. The trouble with him is that he is morally defective. He may be first rate physically, and of excellent mental ability, but a moral imbecile.



In some of these abnormally naughty children the congenital, moral defect becomes obvious very early in life. In others it only shows when the restraints of childhood have been outgrown and the will gets freer play. The astonishingly bad boys that one reads about now and then in the newspapers—the Van Wormser boys, who were lately executed for murder in New York State, or the Chicago boy bandits, whose capture a few months since was attended by so many deaths—may have been of this moral-imbecile type, or they may have been mere normally naughty boys whose ruin came from neglected moral training. For though there are children who have by birth so blessed an inheritance of





virtuous inclination that they can't go very wrong, and though there are other rare children who are cursed by congenital perversity that can only be very imperfectly rectified by training, the great majority of children seem to be made or marred in the raising.



In London the problem of the abnormally naughty children, the "moral deficients," is being discussed by school boards, magistrates, physicians, and others who have special responsibilities about the future of the rising generation. It seems obvious that the "deficients" should be separated from their fellows, but no practical means of doing it has yet been hit upon. In New York the care of children who are naughty enough to fall afoul of the law devolves upon the Children's Court, which deals with them according to the dictates of a large experience. One expedient which it has lately found useful is to turn the erring children over to its chief probation officer. He takes counsel with them, tries to impress upon them the inexpediency of wrong-doing, and lets most of them go on probation under





suspension of sentence. But while on probation they have to report to him at regular intervals. This, as will be seen, is an effort to teach good conduct to children who are only normally naughty and are capable of being trained to follow better courses. Mr. Jenkins, the chief probation officer, says it works pretty well. A suspended sentence hanging over a wayward boy makes an impression on his mind, and usually he makes a decided and successful effort to amend his ways and keep out of the reformatory.



Of all the child problems there is none quite so difficult as the problem of the child who seems to have ample sense to learn everything that is necessary except to be good. The mental imbecile can be cared for—the State will do it if the parents can't. The child who is helpless from deformity or physical misfortune can be provided for. But for the child who is not insane, and who nevertheless shows imperfect moral responsibility, there seems to be no safe place. Take a boy who seems to have good enough brains,





so that he can be educated, and who is physically strong, but is found to lack the power to resist temptation. He may be amiable and agreeable; he may be industrious; he may be sincerely well intentioned. He may do well for a time, but invariably after a while break down and lose moral responsibility, taking to drink, running in debt, following any course of dissipation or extravagance that may be open to him. Such children are born, not very infrequently, in all conditions of life. Doubtless they have some congenital defect that is fatal to their orderly development. They are not insane, and so not fit to be shut up; they are imperfectly responsible, and so not really fit to go at large. But at large they must go, for ordinarily there is no other course to follow with them; to help them to rise is only to insure a harder fall when they fall. They are pathetic creatures, foredoomed, some of them, to a thousand efforts and a thousand failures, a grief to those who care for them, a sorrow to themselves, and never safe

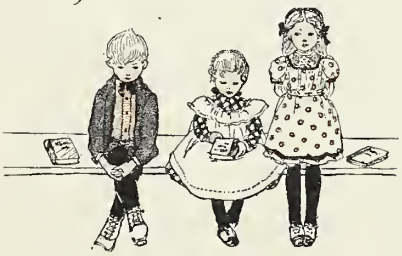




from disaster until their bones go back to earth.

Fortunately the doctrine of the survival of the fittest comes to aid society in dealing with these unfortunates, for usually hardships and excesses and an irregular life wear them out prematurely. There are tramps who seem to find a nomadic life fairly wholesome and to grow fat on casual scraps of food and plenty of sleep out-doors or in hay-mows. There are other mature examples of incorrigible naughtiness who seem to illustrate the preservative qualities of alcohol. They reek usually of rum, and nothing limits their consumption of stimulants except total pecuniary prostration. And yet they live on and on, and year after year the observer who happens to live on the line of their annual progress will wonder to see them still alive. It is extraordinary how long the human frame will sometimes endure the most inconsiderate treatment; but still the rule, with due exceptions, is that grown-ups in whom naughtiness abounds abnormally do not nearly live their time out.







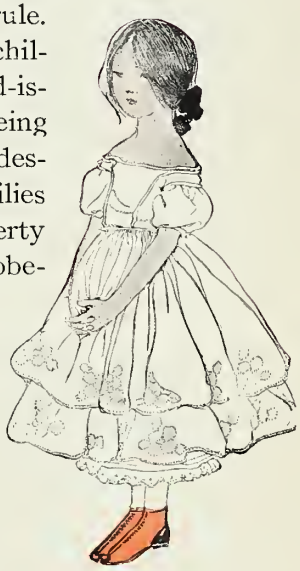
But adult incorrigibles and moral deficients make too sad a topic. To get back to common naughtiness and its treatment. Do you believe in strict discipline or mild? Some one was telling the other day about how Flint, the eminent captain of industry, brought up his family. He is a remarkable man, who has made a huge fortune and is the mastermind in enterprises of enormous scope and importance. He is strong in aggression, strong in defence. He has constantly to decide questions of great importance affecting thousands of people. He is a general in the great industrial struggle which is so important a part of modern life, and of course he is a very busy man. What Flint says *goes* in his vast business, and he cannot afford to say it but once. Strange to say, he has a large family, and they tell me he is very much the same sort of man at home that he is in his office. He believes in system—of course he has to have system in his business—and he is very systematic at home. Things must be done, and they must be done on the stroke of the clock. If Eliza-







beth isn't down to breakfast at so many minutes past seven, when she does come she is not unlikely to be sent back to bed. If Jack fails to make schedule time, according to the paternal schedule, Jack's father takes notice and the notice is apt to be peremptory. They say Flint's children are all afraid of him. That may be true, and yet they may be getting very useful training which will give good results. The results will depend on the material in the children, and also upon how much sense Flint possesses, how much he loves his children, and whether he has the time and the discernment to adapt his methods to their individual requirements. Rules are good in a family—so is system; but you can't raise a family altogether by rule. You can raise turnips that way, but not children. These tick-of-the-watch, my-word-is-law men, like Flint, who are used to being obeyed, are always in danger of becoming despots and spoiling their work in their families by over-restriction of their children's liberty of independent thought and action. Disobe-







dience is naughtiness. Obedience is a first-rate thing; but the purpose of making children promptly obedient is to drill them in good conduct so that they will prefer good conduct when they grow up. Good habits are a most valuable endowment, but hardly so good as the will to do right, and it is possible to impart the habits by a training so rigid that it stunts the will and cramps the mind's development.



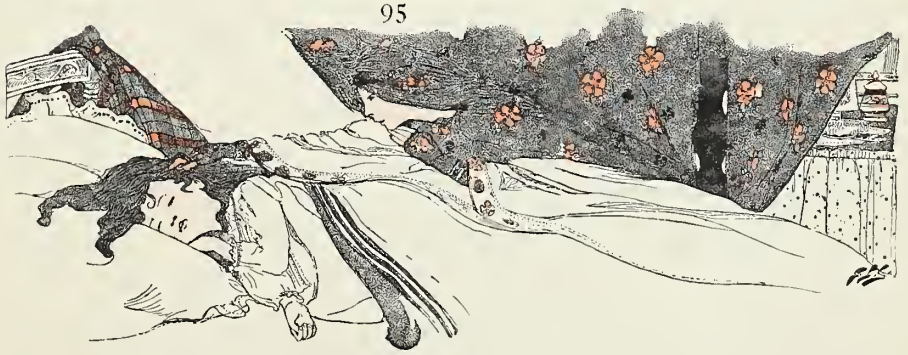
I am not sure that Flint is doing the best for his children that is possible, but, anyhow, he is not neglecting them, and I suspect he is doing the best he knows how. Discipline that is somewhat too strict is far better than neglect. I knew a coachman once, named James. He was a superior man and an excellent disciplinarian with high standards. You could hear his horses coming from clear down the street or around the corner, and you knew they were his by their hoof-beats, because he insisted that they should travel exactly together and keep a steady gait. It is delightful to see anything done well, and it







was delightful to see James drive horses. He had nerves, and was not of exceptionally sweet temper, and sometimes when a green or contumacious horse tried his temper overmuch James would lick him. But he was an excellent horseman, and kept his beasts in excellent condition, and made his helpers do their work, and did his own work thoroughly. He had a number of children, who lived in his house in the back yard near the stable, and he trained those children very much as he did his horses. A strap always hung by the kitchen mantel-piece, and when the children's conduct fell short of James's standard they got the strap. They were all afraid of him, but they all grew up good and did well and were devoted to their father. I hope Flint's children will turn out just as well. James and Flint have a good deal in common—energy, industry, and a resolute purpose to make things go right. James didn't rule entirely by the strap, though the strap came handy for the discouragement of naughtiness; and I don't suppose





Flint rules entirely by system, though system is essential to a man who has a lot to do.

Yet there are many parents who raise families, and raise them very well, without any very rigid system and without keeping a strap within easy reach. They make companions of their children, and though they have a standard of conduct and make their children come up to it, they contrive that the desire to please shall be the compelling motive in their families rather than the fear of the parental law. I suppose that is the more modern method of training. We seem to be, on the average, more gentle and rather more indulgent with our children than our grandparents were, and more solicitous to develop their own individuality than to impress our own individuality upon them. No doubt our modern way is a good way in good hands, but there must be force of character, however gentle, behind it, if it is to produce good results. The business of raising children doesn't take care of itself. It has, ordinarily, to be







attended to thoroughly, if it is going to be successful. There has got to be backbone and intelligence in a family somewhere if naughtiness is not to prevail.







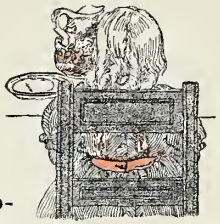
GIRLS AND THEIR EDUCATION



THERE is nothing the matter with girls. No large, general mistake or miscalculation has been made about them. They are a good invention of the kind, and the kind is indispensable and has never been beaten. If you don't think so, there is something the matter with *you*. When a race or a nation doesn't think so, it is an infallible symptom that there is something amiss with that nation. There isn't any surer test of the progress of any people in civilization than its appreciation of girls. We all concede that nowadays, holding that countries in which girl babies are used to be drowned, when an apparent surplus of them happens, are behind the times and fit to be derisively regarded. We notice that the people of such countries cannot hold their own



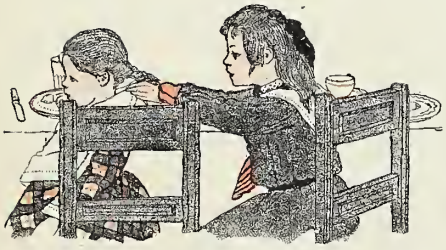




in the great world competition, and that people who have sounder views on this one subject find no great difficulty in whipping them in war. The Chinese, who are somewhat backward in this matter, cannot somehow seem to fight successfully, and the India people and most of the Oriental nations seem to be handicapped by the same perverse attitude towards the feminine half of humanity. They never will get on in the world until they come to have sounder views about girls, for to disparage girls is as futile as to disparage the law of gravitation or any other great cosmic truth that we have got to live by, whether we recognize it or not. It is the exercise of the human will that makes things go ahead on this earth, and when you disparage women, and balk their reasonable aspirations, and leave them with their minds ill trained and imperfectly developed, you waste, by misdirecting it, an enormous amount of will power that ought to be working harmoniously for the betterment of everything.



I do not notice any indisposition to raise

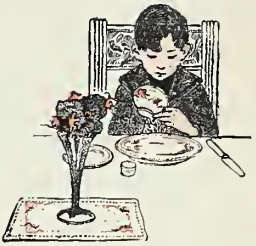




the girls that are born into American families, nor even any clear preference for boys. Both kinds are wanted. Families that have already been blessed with a reasonable provision of girls grieve sometimes, to be sure, when a new-comer also is a girl, but that is natural, and implies no undervaluation of girls, for when a family happens to be all boys there is quite as much disappointment when a new-comer turns out to be another boy. The Oriental tradition which glorifies with such particular fervency the mothers of sons comes very advantageously to our notice in the Bible, but it does not take much of a hold on us. We want both kinds, and we tend more and more to give to both the same kind and the same amount of general education. How much wisdom there is in giving girls and boys the same kind of education is still disputable, for the higher education of girls is a comparatively new thing and still in the experimental stage. Some of the wisest people who are engaged in it are quite ready to admit that they don't fully know what they are about, and that it







is possible that some of the tasks they set the girlish mind to accomplish are not those that eventual experience will select.

Indeed, all education seems to be still an experiment: new theories are constantly being put on trial; old methods are constantly being swapped for new, and almost as constantly the new methods stir misgivings in the minds of some of the observers. Even the kindergarten is not yet above criticism. Able and amusing writers have poked a good deal of rather penetrating fun at it in the magazines, and though as an institution it is well founded and sure to last and to do good, the usefulness of kindergarten methods is felt to have bounds. The aspiration to make education so easy and so pleasant that it will be no trouble to any one is not universally applauded just now, and when critics and commentators declare that effort has great educational value, and that children ought to learn to overcome difficulties, the advocates of the primrose path have to do a good deal of explaining. We know in a general way that small children are







being taught to read and write, that some of them are learning to spell, that they learn arithmetic, geography, and abhorrence of liquor on physiological grounds, and other useful branches. Whether they are taught this year to read a whole word at a time, or by syllables, we don't know. We hope it doesn't matter, for whatever method prevails just now seems likely to be found defective before the year after next. At a conference of teachers the master of a famous school for girls said that fashions in the education of girls change so fast that one method hardly endures long enough to educate a single pupil. "But we find," he added, "that this variability does not harm them." It may have been this same wise teacher, conscious of the limitations of his craft, who said that when he and his staff had brought their girls together and warmed and aired the rooms, about four-fifths of what was possible had been done. He spoke, of course, with more humor than accuracy, but a great deal has been done when a good lot of pupils have been assembled in a suitable







IN SCHOOL



and healthy place and put to work, with good people to look after them. With that much of a start, they will do a great deal for themselves and for one another. We expect them to do a great deal to educate one another. Whether the pupils are girls or boys, their rivalries, their friendships, all their dealings with one another are educational, and help in that formation of character and ideals which is the most important aim of education.



So much is printed about mistaken methods and wrong teaching—the progressive teachers are so scandalized by the way things used to be done, and the conservatives are so mistrustful of the efficiency of the way things *are* done, that the observing parent has excuse enough to despair of finding anywhere anything more than a second-best educational opportunity for his children. Like enough that is all he will find, but he must comfort himself by reasoning that a second-best chance is all a first-rate child needs, and all a second-rate child can improve. There must be an analogy between the science of education and the



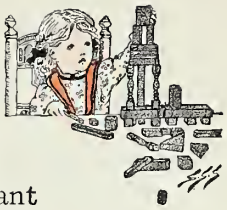


science of cure. What saves all the quacks and patent-medicine men and empirical healers, and keeps their advertisements in the papers, is that a very large proportion of the sick people get more or less well, whether they get professional assistance or not. No doubt a good many of the educational strategies that are tested owe such durability as they attain to the fact that an average child who goes to school will manage to get more or less education, whether the processes in use are rather better or rather worse than the average. Moreover, people who went to school in times past and managed to learn enough to keep afloat in the sea of life are apt to think that the kind of schooling they had was the right kind. If they don't think so, but in their objections show themselves instructed and capable, observers may reason that the kind of bad schooling that was compatible with much good mental fruits must have had good faults.



It is rather a vague business, this directing of the young idea. The little ships have a pretty wide channel ahead, with deep water





from shore to shore, and the folks who want to mark this course or that with buoys as the only safe one may be taking more pains than the facts warrant. There is a school-master in New York who can talk, on compulsion, about the education of girls, but some of his parent customers complain that he talks indefinitely, and that they know no more after hearing him than before. They pay him a compliment. The subject is large and vague, and he realizes it. Nobody talks other than vaguely about a large, vague subject, except persons who do not realize how large and vague the subject is.



One of the special difficulties in educating girls is that the ultimate use of girls' education is as yet much less clearly ascertained than the ultimate use of education for boys. The education of boys is directed in overwhelming measure towards qualifying them to make a living. We try to develop in them the capacity to do something well enough to insure their being paid for doing it, and we want the thing they are to do to be the best thing of which they are capable. If we start





out to make a lawyer of a boy, we begin by giving him general education on the lines that experience has indicated to be best adapted for the purpose. When he knows his three R's, and can bound Kamchatka and spell "separate," and tell who won at Bunker Hill and who at Gettysburg, we teach him Latin, and then Greek, invite him to pasture in the fields of mathematics, philosophy, science, literature, and any of the abutting fields that attract him, and finally, when his mental powers have had a chance to be developed, we teach him all we can about law. Having tried to teach the boy to think, and to give him the necessary facts, words, and images to think with, we give him a particular subject to think about, and turn him loose to think for himself.

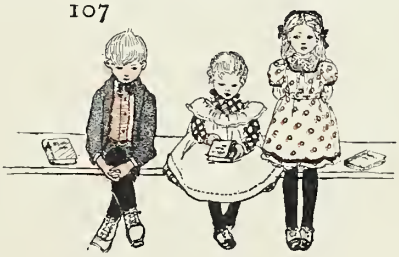
We begin with a girl just as we do with a boy—teach her the elements of contemporaneous knowledge, and then go on and try to develop her ability to think. To that end we use, as yet, very much the same processes that we use for boys, not because we are sure that they are the best ones for girls, but be-





cause they are the ones we know best. But when it comes to giving girls a particular thing to think about, we are apt to pause. It is comparatively plain sailing for a boy. When he has learned the rudiments of his trade he gets a job and proceeds to perfect himself, if he can, by practice. But what sort of a job do we want for our girl? We have entire confidence that there is a place for her in the world, and we have tried to qualify her to fill it with grace and efficiency, but we don't know certainly either where it is or what it is. A vast number of grown-up girls earn money in these days, but still the education of girls is not nearly so generally directed towards making successful wage-earners as the education of boys is. Money wages is a very imperfect measure of usefulness, but, looking about us, we see that a very large majority of the useful men are paid for being useful, and that their pay bears some relation to their usefulness. The surest way to train our boys to make a living is to train them to be useful, and the surest way to train them to be useful







seems to be to train them to make a living. We seldom have any fear that a boy is too valuable to spend his time making a living, for his best development is likely to lie in that direction. But with girls it is a different story. Looking about in the world, we see hundreds of thousands of women earning their living, doing useful work and drawing wages. They and their labors could very ill be spared; but, after all, earning wages is not the indispensable office of women in the world. The indispensable women have scant time to earn wages. They are too busy, and their work is too important. They are keeping house and raising families. We could make shift to rub along somehow if all the wage-earning women in the world quit work, but if the women who are making homes and bringing up children retired from their business, the shop would close.



And there comes in the special complication that affects the education of girls. When you have a fine girl with a good mind, who can learn anything in reason, and be trained to almost any sort of useful labor, after her edu-





cation has come to the point where specialization might begin, you have to face the possibility that by going on and giving her a special thing to think about and work at, you may be aiding to divert her from a woman's greatest career to one, notable it may be, but less satisfying and of less importance. The risk—the apparent risk—is not that a girl may know too much to marry, but that during the years when marriage is best, and easiest, achieved she may be so busy with other concerns as to miss meeting the man whom she ought to marry. For while it may be confidently asserted that no mere intellectual preoccupation is going to hinder a girl from marrying the man whom she recognizes to be the right man if he comes along at the right time and suggests it to her, it is possible that she may be too much preoccupied to recognize him when he comes, and also that her work may remove her from the social point she would naturally occupy, and cause her to miss meeting him altogether.

So, on the whole, while there is pretty gen-







eral agreement that a boy is likely to find the best development of which he is capable by coming reasonably early to a wage-earning task and sticking reasonably close to it, there is by no means the same confidence that that is the best thing for a girl, since we feel that her highest development and greatest usefulness are likely to come with marriage, and that pursuits that prejudice the chances of her marrying are on that account the less desirable for her. And since marriage and wage-earning are imperfectly compatible occupations, we should not choose to educate her primarily to be a wage-earner, but primarily to be a wife, and incidentally to earn wages if she must and while she must.



Now the occupation of being a wife, including presumptively, as it does, the occupation of being a mother, is one of extremely comprehensive scope. Some women who seem not to have had very much education do very well at it, and some women who have been profusely educated make pretty bad work of it. It is a calling in which health goes for







more than accomplishments, that phase of wisdom which we call "gumption" for more than learning, instinct for much, and character for most of all. But you cannot overeducate a girl for the occupation of being a wife. You may keep her too long at her books and out of what we call "society"; you may teach her to value unduly things of minor importance; you may misdirect and miseducate her in various ways; but you can't educate her to think so wisely on so many subjects that she will be above that business. Nobody is really so superior as to be too good to marry. Plenty of women are too good to marry this or that or the other individual man; too many women, perhaps, in these days, are educated beyond the point of being satisfied with any man who is likely to want to marry them, but the woman who seems

. . . too good
For human nature's daily food

hasn't been overeducated. The trouble with her is that she doesn't know enough. She is





not overdeveloped, but stunted. Education is the development of ability, and a wife—and, even more, a mother—can't have her abilities too much developed. Her place is a seat of power, and all the knowledge that she can command will find a field for its employment.



Blandina tells me she is going to college. There seems to be no doubt about it in her mind, and therefore there is very little doubt about it in mine. Her mother has no very fervent liking for girls' colleges. She has old-fashioned views in that particular. Clementine is of her mother's mind. I don't know what Clementine intends to do with herself when she finishes her course in Miss Perkins's school. She is a fair scholar and can acquire book learning when she tries, but is only moderately disposed to try. Her lively interest in life and its concerns hesitates to be overmuch concentrated on lesson-books. I am sure she will learn as much as is necessary, though perhaps not all that is desirable, and when she gets out of school, at nineteen or there-





abouts, I hope, I am sure, that her education will not stop. Judging from present indications, she will be able to think to some purpose at that age, and will be a pretty close and accurate observer of current events and an animated commentator thereon. I hope she will see things and meet people worth talking about, for I look forward to being considerably edified by her discourse on people and affairs in general during the years when Blandina is still in pursuit of all the book learning there is. I think Clementine is going to develop ability to cook and to hire cooks, and I shall be disappointed if she cannot, and does not, learn to trim hats and compose raiment. Perhaps she may even come in time to do her hair properly and to be adequately solicitous about shoe-buttons and details of that sort, though at present it may seem oversanguine to expect time to do so much for her. Anyhow, I am sure there is the making of an interesting and energetic young woman in Clementine, and it is no breach of confidence to say that she bids fair







to do her share towards making creation a place of seemly appearances. The great duty of adorning creation is, of course, one that we should all perform according to our several abilities, but girls and women, being qualified to do best at it, are expected to give it special attention. One of the efforts that is most continuously made in the direction of Clementine's education concerns the elevation of her standard of personal appearance. It is an important part of the education of all young persons. At West Point, for example, they attend to it scrupulously, making it part of the systematic training which youth in the government's seminary there undergo. To be neat and trim and clean, to stand straight and to walk properly, is at least as important for girls as it is for West Point cadets, for how girls look and bear themselves makes a prodigious difference. A slouchy boy is a grievous thing, but a slouchy girl is as bad as a slouchy soldier.



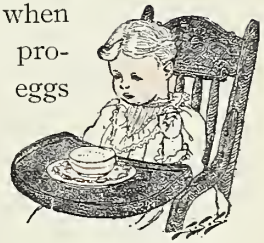


Don't imagine that because Blandina is apt, as I have intimated, in acquiring book





knowledge, I expect her to turn out a bad house-keeper and ineffective in practical affairs. Bookishness is an unreliable test of ability. I have known bookish women who were profuse readers and delighted in study, but were not of much use for anything else, and I have known other women who took books rather hard, but amply made up for that disability by their closeness of observation and mental energy. As between persons who read to save themselves the trouble of thinking, and persons who observe and think, but find reading laborious, the latter are likely to be best worth while. But reading, observation, and thought ought to work well together and to make for practical efficiency. A mind that is capable of Greek and analytical geometry is usually capable also, under proper training, of omelets, good coffee, and household administration. Blandina cannot make an omelet yet (not more than one cook in five hundred can), but last spring, when our family went five weeks without a professing cook, she learned to scramble eggs







very well. And she makes excellent toast, too. To make good toast seems easy, but I never knew a dunce to do it.

I heard Mrs. Robbins commended the other day as a remarkably fine woman. Her great merit had been demonstrated, her laudator said, by her making Charles Robbins such a good wife. That means, of course, that she has made a fairly good husband out of Charles. When you hear of women being good wives it is worth while to remember that the usual proof of a good wife is a good husband. It was no great trick to make a good husband out of Charles, for he was always a man with proclivities towards righteousness; but he is an important man, with great opportunities of influence and usefulness, and she is in truth an admirable wife for him, wise, handsome, devoted, and harmonious. I respect her opinion about girls and their education because she is an exceedingly good example of her kind of American woman. Charles has got rich, so she has the opportunities that come with money, as well as those that come with







brains, but she would have been just as valuable a partner to a man with fifteen hundred a year as to a rich man. Mrs. Robbins went to a girls' college, and she holds that girls who can ought to go to college. Sending a girl to college, she says, should be at least as much a matter of course as sending a boy to college. She thinks that, of the two, the girls need it more, because a woman's life tends to be narrower and more secluded than a man's, and ordinarily she has less opportunity for intellectual growth after she marries. Mrs. Robbins complains that people who plan from the first to send their boys to college still leave the college question open as to their girls. If Clementine were hers, Clementine would go to college, and no questions asked. I am not so far advanced as that yet. Let Blandina go to college if she will. She will take it easily, and will doubtless like it enormously. She is highly gregarious in her inclinations—taking three dolls to bed with her, as a rule—and she positively likes to get her lessons. I am told she has in her the making of a school-







teacher. Let her go to college and learn all there is, including discrimination in the choice of companions. We need some one in the family to read Taine's *English Literature*, and Symonds's *History of the Renaissance in Italy*, and Gibbon, and Burke, and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, and to lead the conversation away from groceries, dress, the cost of things, and gossip, into the higher regions of the mind. You must have noticed how it is about talk—that we talk, in so far as we can, up to or down to the supposed capacity of our listener. Perhaps Blandina will read Dante; I would have read him before now if there had been any call in our family for conversation about him. I have read *Mrs. Wiggs*. There was a call for talk about *Mrs. Wiggs*. Clementine read *Mrs. Wiggs* five times. Jonas is going to college, and may know as much as Blandina ever will, but I have no expectation that Jonas will raise the pitch of the family conversation. Somehow when college boys are not talking about baseball they are talking about football, and for a change they talk about







hockey and track athletics. They are no intellectual help to a parent. I don't know what they teach in girls' colleges, and it doesn't greatly matter, but Blandina can learn it, and if she gets out at twenty-one, duly equipped and qualified for remunerative employment as a teacher, so much the better. If it is expedient for her to earn her living, teaching is important work and makes an excellent resource, even when it does not become a career.







THE EXCHANGE OF CHILDREN



They have a family custom in some parts of Europe—in Denmark and Switzerland more particularly—of swapping children for a while. They think in Denmark that it is not good for a child who is soon to earn its own living to live all the time at home. We recognize the same sentiment when we send our boys and girls to boarding-schools. We want them to get a wider experience of life than they could get at home, to be thrown somewhat more on their own resources, to be quit for a time of the imperfections of our training and get a training of some other kind, which, though doubtless imperfect, will have the stimulating effect that comes from variety. But boarding-schools are expensive, and the great majority of parents cannot afford to send their children to them.





The Danes and Swiss meet that difficulty by this practice of swapping children. The Copenhagen grocer, loath that his boy should be altogether city bred, sends him off for a season to a good farmer whom he knows and trusts, and takes the farmer's boy into his own family in his place. The grocer's boy gets a good taste of country life, learns that potatoes do not grow on bushes nor cabbages on trees, and finds out that Copenhagen isn't the whole world and that there are other industries besides the grocery business. The farmer's boy has his wits sharpened by rubbing up against a town. He makes himself useful in the grocer's shop, learns to sell goods and add up accounts, and is a brighter man and a better man of business in consequence. And it may be that the grocer's boy will develop so strong a taste for agriculture as to turn farmer, or the farmer's boy show such an aptitude for trading that he will prefer to follow that pursuit. So the interchange helps in the important work of suiting employment to taste and getting the round pegs in the





round holes and the square pegs in square ones.



In Switzerland this kind of exchange is practised, not only as a means of broadening experience, but of learning languages. South Switzerland speaks French, North Switzerland German. Children from the southern cantons are sent north, and vice versa, and start presently on their modest careers with two languages at least at their service. To the same special linguistic end Swiss children are sent to Germany and others to England, for Switzerland is a land of inns, taking a huge annual tribute from its neighbors in Europe and from America, and the ability to speak to every tourist in his own tongue has a definite money value to a wage-earning or trading Swiss.

In all the European countries which support great military establishments and require military service from most of the young men, an effort is made to make this enforced service yield as useful a change as possible and serve a valuable educational turn. In France es-

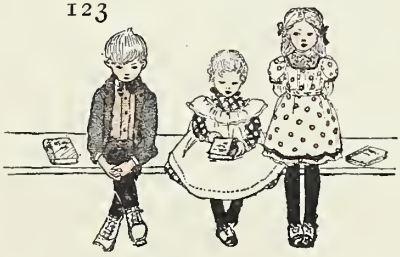




pecially, where all able-bodied young men, except a few that are exempt, must serve three years in the army, pains are taken to send the Paris recruits to the country, where some of the poison may be worked out of their systems, and to send the country boys to Paris, where their peasant sluggishness may be quickened by new and stimulating sights. Officers are actually detailed to take squads of the country recruits to the Paris art galleries and museums. Think of that; how French it is, and how admirable!—though, to be sure, we Americans are capable of doing the like with our public-school children—perhaps we are doing it already.



School-masters and other enlightened people on the French-German frontier exchange child for child—a French boy for a German girl sometimes—and each family not only in time gets back its own with interest, but meanwhile, by harboring and studying and looking after and loving an alien child, gets to know better, and think more kindly of, the nation to which that child belongs. Sov-





ereigns marry their children to the sons or daughters of other sovereigns, largely for the sake of strengthening the ties between the nations and increasing the inducements to keep the peace. In a smaller way these migrations of children serve very efficiently the same purpose.



During the recent visit to Paris of members of the English Parliament, the question of sending French children to live for a time in England and of bringing English children to France was several times touched upon. Something of that sort is already being done in commerce. A certain great shop in Paris has free courses in English for its clerks, and those that are the most successful in these courses are sent to London for six months and placed in some shop there. French industrial firms often exchange young clerks with London houses in the same line of business. A number of excellent French schools give free tuition to English pupils on the sole condition that they speak English with the other pupils so many hours of the day. This system is in



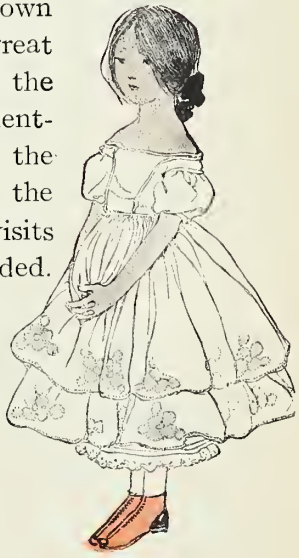


SEWING



use in many English schools. The younger the children are sent away, the quicker will be their progress in the foreign tongue.

I wish we could have here in our own country somewhat more of this shuffling of the little cards in the world's great pack. What we thought of the usefulness of such exchanges for the stimulation of international amity appeared three or four years ago when the Cuban teachers came to the Harvard summer school and saw what could be shown them of this country. It appeared again more lately in Governor Taft's appeal for provision for bringing Filipino youths here to be educated. But that is a governmental enterprise. Something much more like the swapping of children from one home to another in our own country goes on now in the summer on a great scale, when thousands of children from the cities are sent away from cramped tenement-houses and hot streets to be guests in the homes of farmers. It is not quite like the Danish and Swiss system, because the visits are short and the hospitality as yet one-sided.







THE LUXURY OF CHILDREN

The city children get into the country for a while, but the country children don't come to town. There is not on any large scale an exchange of advantages, but only a great provision of country hospitality to city children.

I don't know how we can mend that. Here in New York people live so like sardines in a box, and spare beds, not to speak of spare rooms, are so decidedly an attribute of the rich, that the possibility of offering to country children such hospitality as the country offers to city children seems remote. Yet lots of the country children might come to town and visit with profit and with pleasure, even though they slept in bunks or suffered all the hardships of congested flat life. Very likely the country child would find such hardships extremely entertaining, and get as much fun out of sardine-box living as overindulged civilized people get out of picnics. Parkman liked to share the privacy and shelter of Indian huts with Indian families, and folks in New York are not much tighter packed than



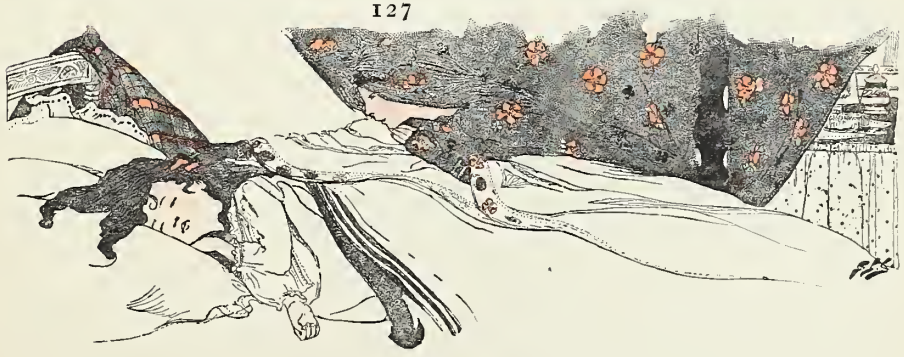






Parkman's Indians, and are cleaner, besides. The old-time country boy who came to town to work in a store slept under the counter, but that was in the days of fewer people and simpler things. I wish the country children might come to town more. The country boys ought to have a chance to compare the perils of the crush hours on the Elevated with the perils of sharing pasture-lots with angry bulls. And then the street-crossings where crowds and carriages and trolley-cars mingle in confused and deadly unconcern! I know a boy who comes to town for his vacations from a country school and who finds the Elevated vastly entertaining, and rides on escalators in various places by the hour, but whose heart sinks at the prospect of crossing Fifth Avenue or Twenty-third Street. It takes weeks for a country child to learn, and dare, to cross a crowded street.

It is good for a child to make visits even in its own neighborhood. The last time Blandina had a bad cold that would not break up, her grown-up cousin came one day and carried





her off to spend a week. She only went a mile away. She kept on with her school and all her other lessons. But she got into a new atmosphere, where the in-doors air was a trifle different, where the touch of a new cook gave variety to the food, where new topics prevailed in the talk, and where there was no sister Clementine who felt qualified by three years' longer experience of life to usurp the authority of an older person and irritate her by suggestions about her conduct. She came back cured of her cold and revived in her spirits.



I have known of Western cities where this sort of neighborhood visiting is very common, especially among girls. It is really a sensible plan. When you can get most of the sensations and benefits of paying a visit without buying a railroad-ticket or leaving town, it is often very well worth doing.

If the East and the West, the North and the South, in our big country could swap children as the Danes do, it would be much to the





advantage of American cohesion. Distance makes that difficult, but, as it is, there is much flitting back and forth. Western youth still come East to school and college in greater actual numbers than ever, though in proportion to the present Western population the number is far less. But Eastern lads and girls do not go West yet in search of schooling. That may come in time. The might of the Western spirit is recognized in the East, and we may some day see Boston parents sending their boys to the great Western universities in order that they may imbibe the feelings that are to govern in this country and catch the dominant Western point of view. To know the West has come to be a mighty important branch of Eastern education. To know the South is an important branch of Northern education, and vice versa. The late Charles Francis Adams learned as a boy to know English character by going to school in England. When he was minister to England during the civil war that knowledge stood him in good stead. It was Cecil Rhodes's idea that his





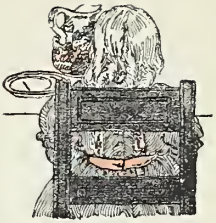


American Oxford scholars should learn to be useful to both countries. He was only carrying out on a larger scale the practice of the Danes and the Swiss.





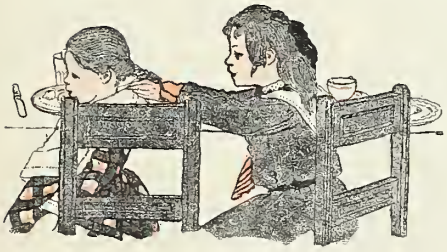




CHILDREN AS AN INCENTIVE

We don't all get what we want in this world, but of those who get much of anything, very few get it unless they have wanted it with an effectual desire. To want something good and hard, and persistently, is almost an indispensable first step towards getting it. I think that most of us are rather lazy wanters. The average mind is not naturally riveted in attainment. The average man in all walks of life is prone to work along rather easily, living by the day and reaping the reward of his industry as it comes. If he goes without what he would like to have rather than take the trouble to get it, we think nothing worse of him than that he is lazy. But if he has children it is different. We are strict with him about his children's wants. If he lets







them lack desirable and attainable things because it is too much trouble for him to get them, we think he is a pretty poor father and not much of a man. The natural, ordinary man needs the spur of necessity or strong obligation. The need of making a living for himself is doubtless enough to start him in work. For the very work's sake, if he likes it, if for nothing more, he will doubtless go a great deal further than mere comfortable subsistence compels. For art's sake some men, like Sargent the painter, seem to go the whole length of their powers and work out the very best there is in them. For duty's sake, or in the service of religion or of the State, very many good men have done the like. But the natural man profits by family cares. His driving-wheels take harder hold on the rails if he is weighted. Love will tempt him on with a stronger and steadier pull than ambition or mere rapacity.



And he will be a gainer, too, in the important end of getting happiness out of life; for is there, on the whole, any sport going that





entertains so well and engrosses so ardently, so many people, as the great and honorable pastime of supporting a family? No game ranks high as a sport that has not some risks in it. There are breathless chances a-plenty in this one. You may not do it, and that is mighty embarrassing if you have the family to support. You may do it, but not to your taste. That is not so bad, for there is always the expectancy of mending your performance. Is there not some cell in your brain that is capable of greater activity, some inertia of your will that can be overcome, some additional nimbleness of wit or fingers that can be attained? The kinks shall come out if there are any kinks, and then—then? Oh, then, the children shall have more "advantages." What the advantages are doesn't greatly matter so long as they seem to be advantageous to the children. They may be anything from more cream at breakfast to a summer in Europe. They may be new shoes, or better clothes, or better schooling, or music-lessons, or dancing-lessons, or horse-back ex-







ercise, or a bigger house in a better street. "Advantages" are relative and depend upon what our contemporaries who live within sight of us are doing for their children. There is no maximum of what solicitous parents want to do, but in most families the understanding about the minimum that is requisite is pretty definite. And I suspect that with us Americans that minimum tends to be rather too high. There isn't really such a vast choice in schools; but so far as there is a choice we want our children to have the best. Expensive clothes are no particular advantage to a child; but dear! dear! how we love to have our children "look nice"! Social opportunities are often snares that waste time and turn heads and make snobs, but they have their value, and, wisely or not, parents take thought and bestir themselves that their children may be "in it." We work for our children, plan for them, spend money on them, buy life insurance for their protection, and some of us even *save* money for them. This last tribute is the







most affecting of all. Making money is pleasant, even though it is sometimes laborious. Spending it on one's children is a delightful form of self-indulgence. Buying life insurance is something we do to promote our own peace of mind. We praise ourselves more or less for all these exercises, but without much reason, for they all gratify us. But saving, for our children's start in life, actual earned money, that we have in hand and might spend on them, is evidence of serious self-denial. Profound must be the depths of the affection that will induce a man to save money for others to spend, unless, indeed, his income gets so big that he can satisfy all his reasonable wants and have some left over. Spending money is so pleasant an indulgence! To forego buying children pleasures which you are here to share, for the sake of pleasures or comforts that they may enjoy after you are gone, is an astonishing flight of altruism. Yet parents not infrequently attain it. It is noticed by various observers that since the fires of hell come to be considered theoretical, men





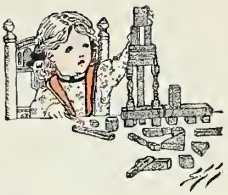


have pretty much lost the fear of death, and are substituting for it the fear of leaving their families inadequately provided for. Even thrift is not too difficult a virtue for an ordinary affectionate parent to attain!

And of course children are a mighty incentive to other virtues besides industry and thrift. They have enormous influence on the parental conduct. "As for me," said a guest at a ladies' lunch-party, "I cannot play bridge for money: I have a son." "So with me," echoed another. "With Charles growing up I could not do it." Bachelors and childless people may say, "After us the deluge," and behave as though very high water was overdue. That will not do for parents. They have a stake in the future. They are intimately concerned in maintaining standards of conduct, and constrained to do their share in keeping society virtuous enough to furnish a safe environment for the rising generation. They must ever be mindful, not only that there will be mouths in the world after they are gone, the filling of which concerns them,







but that a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and if a choice must be made between honor and money, an honorable name, and the standards of behavior that made it honorable, are a better and safer legacy for their children than many dollars however well placed. We care more for true respectability than we realize. All of us who are not fools would rather see our girls marry good men who are not rich than rich men who are not good. For our boys we covet only the kind of success that is consistent with integrity, and the fact that we have boys makes us by so much the more solicitous to keep our own feet out of paths into which we would not choose to have their feet follow. Indulgences that are fairly safe for Fifty are avoided because they are not safe for Twenty-one, and because Twenty-one keeps an eye on Fifty and is disposed to conclude that what Fifty permits himself to do is about right.



It has been said that the commonest reason why so many men's minds stop developing is that when they get out of school—or perhaps





out of college—they have to concentrate most of their attention on making a living. To incur responsibility for the maintenance of children is a measure not immediately adapted to divert them from that employment, but as the children grow up and pass in their turn through the various stages of education, they are very commonly a strong and useful mental stimulant to their parents. They bring the old knowledge back into the house, and new knowledge with it. Their minds, not yet geared to workaday problems, run on matters more polite and more intellectual. I find that Clementine's incursions into grammar and history vary to great advantage the table-talk of our family, and her disputes with Blandina over what words are good and what are not, and what happened, and when and why, give the paternal mind very timely and valuable fillips. I am told that my neighbor, Lawyer Clinton, had never studied Latin until his boys began it, but he felt that he had to keep up, and by the time they got to Cæsar he was in Cæsar too, reading the story of the cam-

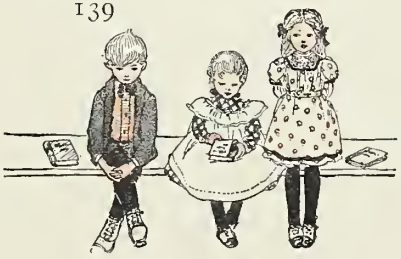




paigns in Gaul for his amusement in the evening, after his day's work at law. The last I heard he was getting out an edition of Horace. Many a father has rubbed up his rusty Latin, or even Greek, in the stimulating company of a growing child. Mothers have followed their boys, book by book, through school and college. The new knowledge of the rising generation, which sets so strongly towards science, and the new philosophies and histories, are brought inside the door of the parent whose children are concerned with them, and it is a dull parent whose interests are not broadened and quickened by the experience.



Then, too, there are the conclusions which grown-up people who have thought thoughts, have reached in their day, and put away in their minds. There they rest undisturbed for years it may be. But when the children come in turn to a scrutiny of the eternal verities, again the old processes of reasoning begin their work in the parental mind, and the old conclusions, varied perhaps by riper ex-





perience, find new expression in the service of youth. What we knew we recall; what we know we impart; what we don't know we are constrained to learn if we can, because new questions are brought to us by questioners whom it concerns us to answer.

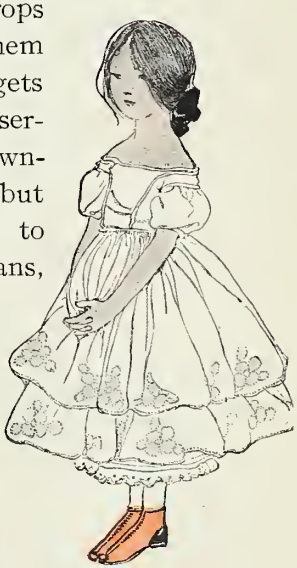
It has been the fashion to carp at the modern American father as a poor, overworked creature whose office it is to bring home money for his wife and children to spend. He is derided for his meekness and condoled with as the victim of his own devotion. There is plenty of nonsense about all that. Are there so many ways of having fun on this earth that are more satisfying than working for one's own? If only the father's labors are truly profitable to his children, and they grow up as he would have them, there is no failure of amusement or misapplication of work. To be sure, his time and thought may be overmuch diverted to money-making, for it is a wise and skilful parent that can make much money do his children good, or can even prevent them from being harmed by it. The natural fruit







of money is ease, and too much of that does not make for advantageous development in early life. Money hires good servants, and they are a great luxury, but I have heard parents who themselves valued that luxury lament that their children seemed to do nothing for themselves. For people whose time is precious and their strength taxed, to be relieved of all possible drudgery is excellent economy. To relieve children of drudgery to a sufficient extent to give them time for the other work that is laid out for them is a profitable interposition. But some daily drudgery is good for every one, and very good for children. When Clementine, loath to put down her story in the exciting place, calls Susan to light the lamp for her; when Blandina drops her hat and coat in a chair and leaves them for Matilda to hang up, neither of them gets any parental encouragement. Ordering servants may be good training for some grown-ups, and develop their executive ability, but for children a more important lesson is to learn what work is and what order means,







and they should learn it betimes and by actual practice.

Those American fathers that we hear of, who are immersed in business and leave their children to wander about the world, make a mistake, but not the mistake of being too devoted. Their mistake is that they neglect their children, giving their whole attention to things of less importance. And another mistake that is easily fallen into by men who are used to being owners of many things and masters of many employés, is to think that because they spend money freely for their children and supply them with many unnecessary things, they own *them*, too, and have a right to shape their lives according to their own desires and whims. Money laid by makes for freedom of choice, but the great possessions of a parent may easily tend to restrict the reasonable liberty of the child. If the tail is big enough, it may wag the dog; if a fortune is great enough, it may dominate not only its possessor but his heirs. The man who has children and wants money is in a position that



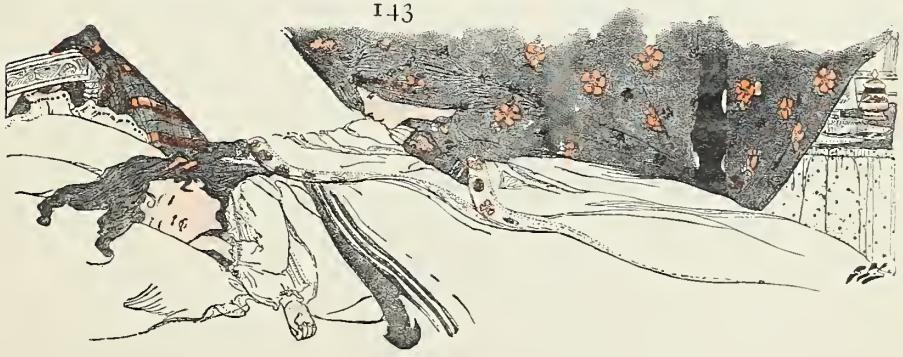






is favorable to wholesome exertion. We can all sympathize with his desires. I don't know that sympathy can be quite so safely bestowed on the man who has got together much money and wants children. Of course he wants them, to inherit his property so that he can die with more satisfaction. It is an entirely natural desire; I hope he may have them, but children don't do so much real good to the man whose work is done as to the man who is still at his work. And the philosopher may reasonably argue that the child who is born to a parent who is anxiously concerned to make him a useful and successful worker is born to a better opportunity than if he were hailed at birth as the welcome receptacle of gains already acquired.

Greatly important and greatly remunerative is this business of raising and training children and being trained in turn by them. It comes very near being the best worth-while thing there is. Only the duty of serving that larger family that we call the public, or the larger public that constitutes mankind, can





rival it in weight of obligation and in richness of reward. It is, of course, matter for regret when the pressure of domestic responsibilities and the duty of providing for his children keep out of the public service a first-rate man whose services the public needs. But that does not often happen. When the public's need is acute enough, and the public knows its mind clearly enough about the man it wants, it gets its man, and his children must wait if necessary till the public has got through with him. But so far as personal enjoyment and profit go, the average man cannot spend his strength, or what it yields, to better purpose than for his children, nor can he do better by society than by leaving behind him worthy and valuable living representatives of his labors on earth.







WOMEN



Souvent femme varie is a familiar sentiment of the French language about women. It came down lawfully from Rome and Virgil's *Varium et mutabile semper femina.* Persons with skill in the use of words seem in all ages to have liked to say smart things about women in general, and especially things which convey a measure of deprecative disparagement. Even we Anglo-Saxons, who modestly assume to represent the real hard-sense of the universe, have a tradition that it is a woman's privilege to change her mind, and I dare say that that is part of the common law of England and of countries whose legal principles are of English derivation. She ought to have that privilege. So long as man proposes, woman's right of dissent ought to be



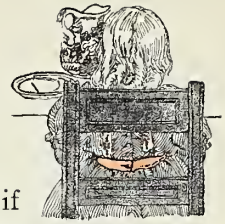


as much extended as the security of vested interests and the general welfare of society allow. Maybe she *is* more changeable than man. Maybe she *is* somewhat flightier, more subject to revulsions of feeling, more prone to be swayed by feelings rather than reason, more easily persuaded than convinced, and, in consequence, more subject to subsequent dissuasion. If so, very well! There are various considerations that explain it, if one cares for explanation. But to explain woman seems more or less of an impertinence. She represents two forces—God who made her; man who has been the chief influence in her development. Was there fault in her creation? Surely we will not venture to say that. We do not think it, either. We bow in grateful admiration of our Maker's handiwork. Have there been faults, then, in her development? Myriads of them, doubtless, if one regards particulars, but if there is complaint due let her complain, not us, for the faults are man's, and she is the victim. Whatever has gone wrong with woman in this world is

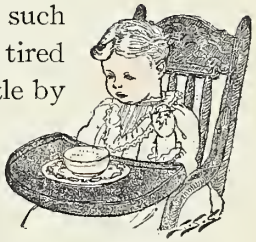








man's fault. If she has been kept down; if she has been too much exalted; if she has been taught too much or too little, has got out of her proper sphere or missed her due development because the sphere accorded her was too narrow—it is all man's fault, and he must expect to settle for it. Even if she is fickle, as France and Virgil suggest—but she is not fickle; that is not true of woman at large. Even if she is not always sure of her own mind, and is apter than man to change it, does not the final cause of that lie in the imperfect trustworthiness of man? The woman who is sure of her man is apt to be sure of herself. Of course there are exceptions, but the jilts and the defaulters are not all feminine. Men have the leading place in the world's activities. Woman waits for man to tell her what to do. If a man comes along who is equal to that duty, and whose direction is acceptable to her and gains her confidence, she follows its general intention and is content. But if such a man doesn't come along, when she gets tired waiting she starts out for herself, and little by







little establishes her own course and shapes her habits to it. Or if the man who does come along, and whom she determines to trust, proves, as usually happens, a person of defective wisdom, she takes what guidance he can give her and ekes it out from her own stock of sense. If the case is worse still, she supplies such sense and guidance as she can for both.



When men have been perfected and are just what they ought to be, there won't be any more trouble about women, or what their sphere is, or whether they are getting too much out of it. Their sphere is big enough. There is abundance of work in the world for all the men and all the women, and women will naturally take to the jobs that suit women best. Nature will regulate that if men give her a fair chance. But it promises to be some time yet before men are perfected, and meanwhile vast numbers of them will shirk their proper work and leave it for some one else. If it has to be done, and there is no one else to do it, it will be done by women, and





the women who do it will develop a capacity for doing it fairly well.

There are startling examples of the development of this capacity in women for doing men's work. When families that have been strong and prospered get started down-hill, and the men die off, or go to seed, or lose heart or health, it is not an uncommon thing to see the women develop under stress of circumstances a virile vigor that meets the storm and weathers it. Very able women are developed by defects in man, and of course when the wheel has once fallen to them and their wills have been trained to steering, they will not readily give up a place that they have fairly won. Nor should they. The mischief, what there is of it, has been done; let the consequences abide. The chief mischief is that, though a woman may come out strong in doing a man's work, the man whose work is done for him—if there is one—is apt to come out weak. He has lost his place, and the woman's place that is left vacant is not good for him. He can't fill it. If he is feeble,







or gratefully dutiful, or discouraged, he may take it and perhaps do his best. But if there is strength and some audacity of impulse left in him, out he goes into the world to be a man and meet a man's fate.

An individual woman may be cramped, suppressed, or developed out of her natural lines and in a measure unsexed by environment or circumstances. The women of a city, or of a State, or of a generation or age in any country may rise or sink, develop or contract, as compared with their men or with other contemporary women in their world. Womankind may have an element of variableness which observing males take note of, but woman, taken by and large and considered for as long a period as history covers, seems by no means a variable, but one of the most constant things in nature. We can't go back far enough to find a woman who doesn't look natural to us, and of whom we do not feel that if we knew her we would come almost as near understanding her as we come to understanding the women of our own time and







IN PADDLING



acquaintance. In the Gizeh Museum there is a wooden effigy of a gentlewoman who lived some time in the Pyramid epoch—so the learned say, and they put the Pyramids back about four thousand years before Christ. Six thousand years ago! We used to be taught that the world began about then. Now we think we know that a thousand years are but as yesterday with the Almighty, and that six of them cut no great figure in the development of the human race. And yet six thousand years ago is pretty old times as we look back. Ten score generations! That seems a reasonable antiquity, and this lady—they found her effigy in her tomb—look some time at the picture of it! She isn't of our race, to be sure, but you will notice how absolutely, how contemporaneously human she looks. Her head-dress is a little odd, but that would come off, and with it off, and her hair done as our women do theirs, and a shirt-waist or any such detail of modern raiment on her, she would look nowise unusual across the breakfast-table from any one of us.







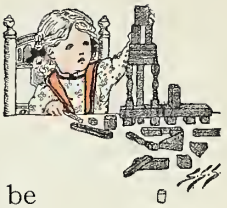
THE LUXURY OF CHILDREN

The women of the past whose likenesses the great painters and sculptors have transmitted were women from the more favored and richer walks of life, but none of them seems to us even out of date. They are not the less women from being royal or princely; not the less familiar from being unknown.



Are women better than men? Certainly they are negatively better. They don't drink so much or smoke so much. They are less prone to crime, especially to crimes of violence. Certain of their passions are much less obstreperous than the corresponding passions in men. Not all the temptations which men are subject to assail them with equal force. They are gentler than men, but that is partly because they are more timid. Do you think they are kinder than men? Timidity does not make folks kind, but inclines contrariwise. Affirmative kindness commonly has a fair store of courage behind it. There is a deal of kindness in men, though it is not quite so near the surface as the kindness of kind women. Men are apt to be kinder to women





than women are, and women are apt to be kinder to men than to women; and both these tendencies belong in the class of facts which we are used to call "providential." Beyond that, it seems hardly safe to generalize about the comparative kindness of men and women.

But woman isn't really better than man. She is only different, and the marvels and advantages of her differences are so prodigious that long, long ago she herself took permanent place in that distinguished class of things, just mentioned, that men call providential. Women and men are so inextricably tangled up that if the women were really better than the men the men would have to rise to their level. The other thing is what seems to happen. The women keep to the level that the men attain. Their righteousness has tendencies to certain defects. They take more naturally than men to religion; they are more urgent promoters of temperance; but, as a rule, they don't appreciate the vital worth of freedom, without which religion tends to become a shackle and temperance a mere dep-







rivation. One suspects that if woman had made the world she would have left out temptation. The Creator let it in, and with it the possibility of freedom.

Certain phases of truth of a mystical quality seem to come to earth most readily through women. At least women are more hospitable to them at the start than men. Perhaps their faith is easier stirred; perhaps there is a receptive instinct in the feminine mind that man doesn't match. At any rate, woman, even if she does not herself set up as a prophet, accepts the prophet's message, whether it is true or false, more readily than man. The spiritualist mediums have all been women, and a very doubtful business they seem to have been in. The Christian Scientists are nine-tenths women, and one wonders whether that merely means that women are easier fooled than men. I don't think it does mean that, though like enough that is true. It means a quality of mind to be observed and wondered at, rather than too blindly trusted, but without which earth's prospects would be

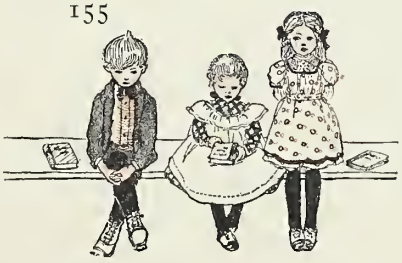




less hopeful than they are. Joan of Arc heard voices, and though the matter-of-fact Britons finally burned her, history by no means regards her as a deluded female.



On women is laid most of the obligation to beautify existence. Jewels and fine raiment, fabrics of great price, beautiful in color and in texture, houses that are splendid, and gardens that are gay are chiefly for them. Man might be trusted to maintain the noble army of cooks, and see that the art of preparing food and drink did not fall into decay, but if men did not love women, and women did not love beauty and adornment, earth would not be so handsome a planet as it is, albeit the folks in it might still be active and well nourished. Women do not invent. It is unusual for a woman to have even a moderate talent for mechanics. They do not excel in driving nails or sharpening lead-pencils. Their carpentry is a grief. There are no successful woman-plumbers. If women set the world's pace we should never have flying-machines. The sort of progress, so notable nowadays,





that depends upon machinery would stop. But if woman's influence was less than it is, there would be more wars, more drunkenness, more waste, and what men win from nature and add to knowledge would yield far less happiness than it does.

Let us thank Heaven that, though some women go to college nowadays, and some vote and others want to, and though the new woman, whom we think we have developed, has qualities which have caused her to be gratefully declined by heathen so progressive as the Japanese, woman has been for so very long so very much like what she is now that we have excellent grounds to hope that she will keep on to the end without change that will make her less womanly, or developments that are more sweeping than man may hope to share. The improvement we may anticipate, in woman as in man, is not so much the development of finer individuals as the raising of the general average. The great men of to-day don't seem to be greater than the great men of long ago. Neither are

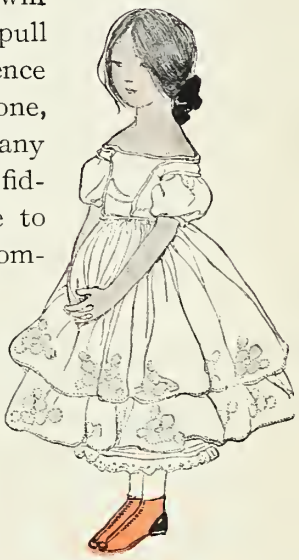






the fine women finer. But there is a basis for the belief that the average has risen in intelligence and efficiency as civilization has progressed.

Some women always have been, and some women always will be, the superiors of most men, but there is no sign that women in general will ever equal, much less surpass, men at the business of governing and developing the earth. The old theory that woman is man's helper seems incorrigibly well founded. If the situation isn't satisfactory to her there is no help for it, for the conditions it came out of seem to be eternal. Women may vote. They will be none the less man's helpers if they do. They never will band together to put man down and teach him his place. They will push him ahead if they can; they will pull him along when they must; they will influence him enormously as they always have done, but they will never conspire together on any very great scale to make him play second fiddle. Women in general will never agree to have women bosses so long as there are com-

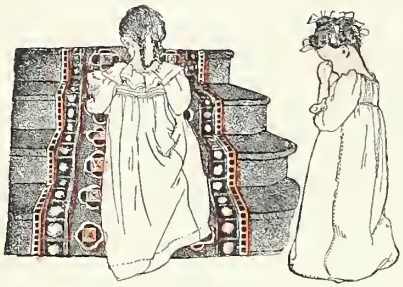






petent men for that use. There always will be competent men so long as competent women raise sons. The thing that is certain about woman is that she is man's indispensable mate, and that though she may rise with him or fall with him, she never, willingly or otherwise, will rise on his ruins. He may be a poor thing, but he is her own, the most valuable possession that nature has given her, and the one she is least disposed to disparage or misuse.



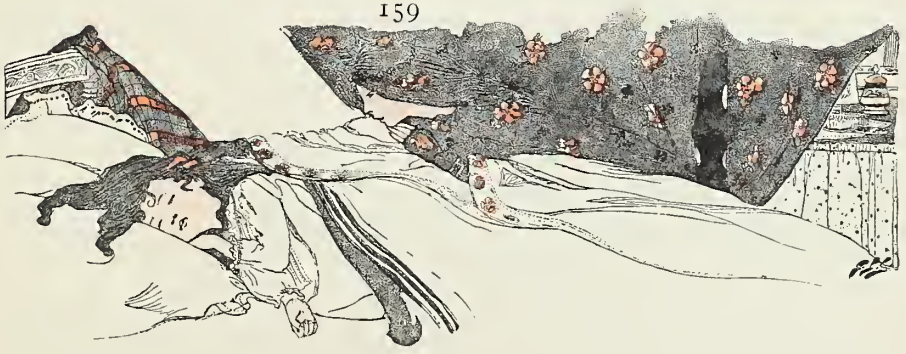






REAL LIFE

I was speaking to Ferguson about the way he had degenerated since he came to New York. When I had known him in Slinterville he had been a person, but I had to confess to him that, in so far as I could judge from an observation which, to be sure, was superficial, he had come to be something no better than an incident. He did not deny it. It was true, he said, that he was hardly a person any more, but had become the attribute of an environment; but he maintained that his state was not so very bad so long as he recognized and accepted it for what it was, and did not delude himself with the notion that it was really life. "There is life," said Ferguson, "and there is work. There is a species of life of which work is an incident, and there





is a species of work of which life is an incident. That phase of activity which we call living in New York is to be classed, so far as I am concerned, under this second head. Of course, considered as life, it is ridiculous; but considered as work, it has many agreeable alleviations."

"It is captivity," said I. "Life in any big city is captivity."



"You may call it that," said Ferguson. "A man who has to work for other men is more or less a captive while he is busy with his tasks, wherever it is that he puts his work in. To spend the day between plough-handles (if there are such things now) is captivity while it lasts, and a species of it to which a great many persons find more objections than to life in a big town. Life itself is captivity. We are captives because our spirits are shut up in bodies which have to be fed, and which have no wings to fly with. The fact that our bodies happen to be in New York and not in Slinterville isn't so very significant."

I don't know that it is. It is what we





think about and what we do that make the difference, rather than where we are, and there is no doubt that multitudes of people find thought and action satisfactory in New York. Yet there prevails a consciousness, wide-spread and regretful, that life in great cities is not quite real life. Some observers even go so far as to insist that it is incorrigibly artificial. It suits most of us in a general way, because we also are considerably artificial. We get used to our kind of factory life. We don't like to get up our own steam, but find it easier in the morning to throw in the clutch that connects our personal machine with a line of shafting that never ceases to turn. We need compulsion; we need to be driven; to be in such close relations with a progressive community that we have to do our daily stint if we are to keep our place. But back of this need lurks the persuasion that real life is a condition of fuller freedom than we know, whereof the impulses come more from within and are shaped by greater considerations than immediate daily







needs, and the hope of living somewhat more to our taste for a few years before we die.

It is not a state of ease—this real life that we dream of—for we know that too much ease is no better for us than too much food or drink. It is not even a state of wealth, except that we are all prone to believe that if we had larger incomes, and were less strictly bound to the work of earning them, we could shape our lives more to our satisfaction. It is a state in which we shall think higher and wiser thoughts; shall love better, shall help more, shall work more efficiently for nobler ends, and be happier and better justified in doing so. The realization of a higher destiny is what we are after. Almost universally we city-dwellers seem haunted by a desire to get back to the soil, and to modify the influences of man-made machinery and man-made streets and habitations by the inspirations of nature. It troubles us that spring, year after year, should work its miracles in the fields and the woods and we not see them, that year after year the cherry-trees and the



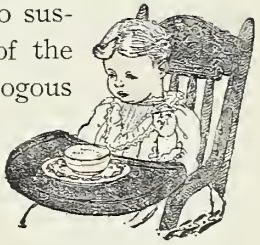




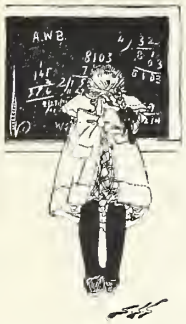


apple-trees should blossom and we not be there. We are missing too much; far too much! To watch the signs of the changing seasons is a consideration of things in general that is profoundly restful to us in our daily battle with details.

Are there not compensations for our losses? Do we want the earth? Oh yes, there are highly important compensations, else the town would never keep us; but we do want the earth, and our craving for it is a healthy appetite based on an instinctive appreciation of what, in the long-run, is good for us. We want real life, or at all events as large a share of it as we can get. The ideal of real life varies in individuals. Brown's ideal includes fishing. Every spring these many years he has broken out of town and hied him to the North Woods to be eaten of black flies, and to angle for trout. That is a taste of the real thing for Brown; the most real experience of all his twelvemonth, and it helps him to sustain the artifical comforts and duties of the rest of the year. Jones makes an analogous







sortie in due season, and goes far north to kill salmon. Robinson journeys westward after big game. Smith has a yacht. Thomson shoots ducks. Fessenden has a farm with real cows on it, and hens. Simpson has the strongest impulse to get back to nature of any of them. Simpson is a plumber by profession, and has some skill at carpentering. He can make a living and something to spare by those industries whenever he is content to stick to them. He works at them diligently from November to May. But he has an avocation. He is a painter. When May comes he quits working at his trades for his living, and turns to his avocation and to the enjoyment of nature. Gathering in his surplus, and making a bundle of his belongings, out he goes onto the road with his sketch-book, and is a blessed tramp all summer long, wandering where he will, taking time as though all time were his, sketching and painting with as much pleasure as though he could do it well, denying his stomach somewhat, but indulging his soul, owning the earth, and enjoy-







ing the fulness of it. I am told that Simpson's enjoyment of life is prodigious. There seem to be immense compensations about tramp life, for men who take to it are apt to stick to it in spite of its manifold drawbacks and its obvious discomforts. Simpson follows it in a respectable and responsible fashion. He can do it, for he is a bachelor, indifferent to pecuniary acquisitions, and careless as to what kind of a funeral he has or at whose cost. His impulse, like Brown's, Jones's, Robinson's, Smith's, Thomson's, and Fessenden's, is reversionary—an impulse towards the occupations or conditions of a more primitive life. Our forebears fished, hunted, sailed, and farmed. If we go back far enough some of them were nomads. We seem to have inherited proclivities for all their occupations, and long for them with recurrent yearnings, and pursue the faint shadows of them from time to time at great cost of time, labor, and money. Our quest is for a state of mind. We don't go fishing after fish, nor hunting after meat, but because we want to







think different thoughts and feel different sensations. We would cheat time, and swap illusions.

One great charm about children is that life is always real to them, and they don't have these reversionary longings after something more genuine. The bird in the hand is the bird for them. The bird in the bush gives them no particular concern. When it comes time to go to the country they are ready; aye, they are eager. For any good thing the country may offer—flowers, grass, trees, birds, water, ponies, pets—they have lively anticipations beforehand, and in due time appreciation to match. They take short views of life: that is one of their good traits. Awhile ago Blandina had a birthday. There are five birthdays in our family, and hers is the only one that is kept. Two of the five belong to grown-up persons, who have reached a time of life when the sentiment about birthdays is, "Least said, soonest mended." Two others of them fall in the Christmas holidays, and tend to be merged in the general activ-







ities of that season. But Blandina's birthday is at a safe distance from any other festival, and suffers from no sort of blight. It is kept because she keeps it. She is living real life, and attending to all its details. Months ahead she blocked out her birthday party, and as the time came nearer chose her girls. When it was time to send out invitations Blandina knew exactly how many were to be sent, and where each one was to go. Such details as the complexion of the ice-cream and the species of the cakes were clear in her mind. Everything about that party, down to her father's birthday offering, was predestined by herself. She had no misgivings about it; no fears that the company would not have fun, or that she would fail to find due joy in her labors. Neither had she any doubts whether, on the whole, birthday parties were worth the trouble. Doubts seldom bother Blandina. She knows what she likes, and when her turn comes she arranges to get it. She also knows pretty definitely what her duties are, and they are usually done. To







make her birthday party was a comparatively easy labor, because her requirements were so definite. Of course her party was a success. It is a comparatively simple labor to contrive success for persons of constant minds, who know what they want, want what they can have, and are pleased when they get it. They are the people to whom life is always real.



I hear no complaints from Jonas about the unreality of life. Jonas is away at school in the State of Massachusetts. Life with him goes so earnestly that it is only by a prodigious effort that he finds time during the week to scribble a letter in pencil to his mother. He tells how Brampton of the Sixth form reached second base in the recent match while the guardian of that bag was in the air aspiring to the ball, and how the said guardian came down on Brampton's hand and spiked it, to the grief of the school, which fears that Brampton's injury may prejudice its chances in the coming important match with St. Kits. He speaks of his progress in learning; cheerfully in the case of this branch, with less satisfaction





in the case of that, and in the postscript he usually records: "I have busted my glasses." But when they are not busted, the life he sees through them is real.

So as to Clementine. If there is sawdust in her doll she does not know it. Not but that she has sorrows. The day she came home to find that our dogling had gone to live permanently with the man who spaded up our back yard it seemed for a time that there was no balm in Gilead. To say that the lost one had neither good sense nor good habits, that he was unteachable, unreliable, impossible, had no bearing on the case as Clementine saw it. "I never even had a chance to say good-bye to him," she wailed, and though when dinner came she ate her soup, her tears fell into it. No, life is no fiction to Clementine. It is a very real experience, even though three-quarters of it is spent in town. And a satisfactory experience, too, full of close observation, swift reflection, and conclusions that are always interesting, though not always sound. To see Clementine standing by her bicycle at







the other end of the block, inspecting the babies who are out taking the air, is to see a live person abounding in contemporaneous human interest.

One of the greatest shows of real life anywhere to be witnessed may be seen any fine Saturday in May in Central Park. Give the great town credit for its wonderful May parties. On one Saturday last May twenty thousand children, the papers said, revelled in the park all day. Certainly in one great meadow there were thousands; an incessant company, bright with color, careless, delightful; supervised, but not constrained, by hundreds of astute elders. Who has eyes to see will not ask for a sight more healing to the spirit than a park meadow full of joyous children on a brilliant May day.

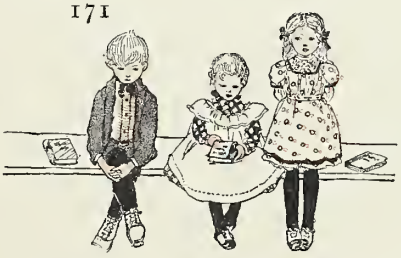
Children are like gardens, and the country, and the woods and streams, in their power to distract our minds from the machinery of living and bring them back to the realities of life. If we keep the child in us alive we get along, and children help us vastly in doing





that. Most of them have an advantage over us grown-ups in not being much concerned with the ways-and-means problem and with money-making. They realize, as we may not, the injunction to take no thought for the morrow. They represent the primitive human being to whose attitude towards life we have periodical impulses to revert. It is a truism that the attitude of a right-minded child towards life is the ideal attitude. Suppose all the world took it? Suppose all the world lived by the day, doing its daily task, and leaving the future to shift for itself? Would it get on worse than it does, provided each day's work was done? The future is the issue of the present and the past. No prescience of any of us can change it much. The great mass of Earth's people do actually live much as children live, doing daily what comes to hand, and leaving the final issue to Fate. The dog hides the bone he does not need to-day against to-morrow's wants. The squirrel lays up a store of nuts against the winter. The bees gather honey all summer







long and accumulate a surplus. Men do the like, and do well. They need far greater stores than bees or squirrels, and they gather them. But when it comes to shaping the distant future, how much of the thought taken to that end is beneficially effective? Think of the Philippines, think of the Transvaal, think of the Southern negroes, think of all the trust and commercial combinations that shrewd men have bent their brows and lost their sleep over; think of enormous fortunes won, of vast power exercised by few men—how much of all the scheming and planning of grown-up humans yields results that last beyond the day; and of the remote results, what is the ratio between benefits and mischiefs? The day's work counts for good or bad according to its wisdom and its spirit, but the plans men make to shape ultimate human destiny tend to be either superfluous or ineffectual.

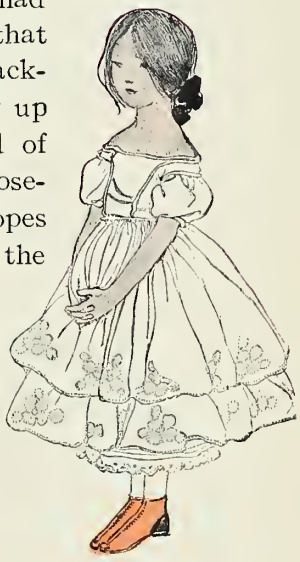






THE PINCH OF COMFORT

We had finished talking divorce and had got onto politics. I can't remember whether Cattlett's discussion of the prospective sacking of Newport grew out of our divorce talk or the next subject. I hope he will tell more fully sometime the tale of the lady of high fashion who, speaking for her group, said to him, "You know, Mr. Cattlett, it's only a question of time when we shall be looted." I didn't know that people of high fashion had such interesting thoughts. It was that that gave Cattlett the germ of that idea of the sacking of Newport—a delightful idea calling up ravishing visions of delectable loot, and of repairing the fatigues of pillage with goose-liver pâtés and champagne. Cattlett hopes to be there with a catalogue telling where the







best things are. When there is an art sale, he watches the papers to see where the best things go. When there is a loan exhibition, he notices where the best things come from. Not that he is rapacious. It is merely that he thinks a thoughtful man should face the future with the fullest information he can amass.

Progressing to politics, we had agreed (except Dacre) that it was time there were again two sane political parties in the country. Dacre wouldn't agree to anything that prejudiced at all the certainty of President Roosevelt's re-election. He had been to Washington and seen the siren of San Juan, and there was only one candidate in all the world for him, and, for the time being, only one party. But Cattlett and I, being family men, favored the existence of reasonable alternatives. There should be at least two baskets, we thought, in which our country's eggs would be safe. Then Cattlett told how his father quit the old Democratic party after the Baltimore convention of 1856 and stump-





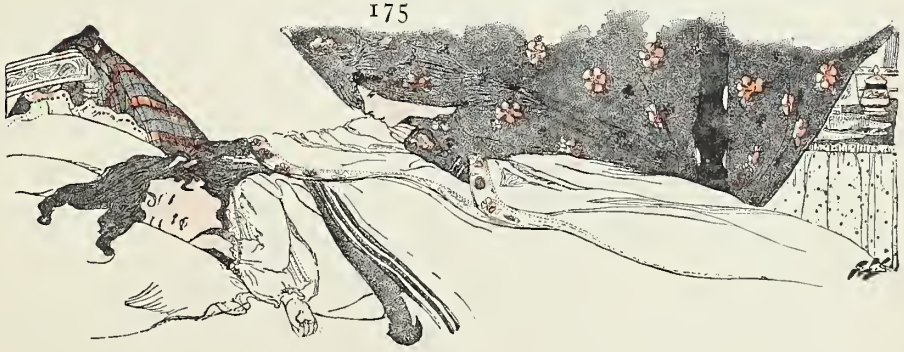




ed Pennsylvania at his own cost all one summer for Frémont. He wasn't at all a rich man, either; but where the vital interest of the country seemed to be concerned he was in earnest, and had time and money to spare.

"And living was cheaper then, Cattlett," said I. "Even a poor man could sometimes spare a little time from the pursuit of the means of subsistence. If the country got into a seriously bad hole, he could take, at a pinch, a month off, and try to get it out."

Money went farther in 1856. Wages were very much lower; some kinds of food were lower, though manufactured things were higher; but we all agreed that the great reason why living was cheaper then was that we didn't have to have so much. We could scrape along without so many comforts. And then Cattlett and I both joined in the wail that prevails so widely just now throughout this country over the difficulty of living within incomes. It is a little worse than usual, this year because the flush times are past, and incomes in many instances are not so large





as they have been. Then, too, the cost of food and other necessaries has risen. But the chief trouble is that the standard of comfort has been steadily and rapidly rising. I reminded Cattlett that Harvard College last year spent about forty thousand dollars more than its income. Its income turned out to be less than was expected, but the main difficulty lay in the rise in the standard of comfort which has made it more expensive for Harvard College to live.



"If so far-sighted and prudent a concern as Harvard College is misled," said I, "into an excess of expenditure, the rest of us may perhaps find solace in the thought that maybe circumstances are more than usually to blame for our more or less modest deficits."

Dacre dissented, but he is a bachelor and a Scotchman. What does he know about the cost of living or the difficulties of achieving thrift. Is it much of a trick to furnish one's personal stomach with the raw material of energy, to house and clothe a single adult man, and provide him with clubs, books,





SHADOW-TIME



theatre tickets, vacations, church privileges, and spending-money? No; a competent adult man of Scotch descent may still compass all that and show a satisfactory annual surplus to his credit. But Cattlett understood.

"Do your boys outgrow their shoes," he asked, "before they wear them out?"

"Always; long before."



"And your school-bills—let me see—must be so and so?"

"They are."

"And to keep the teeth of a growing child in order costs annually—"

"Oh yes," I interrupted.

"And so many servants cost—"

"Yes, yes, and for rent all you've got left. Hold on! *Ex pede Herculem.* I see you know all, but don't divulge anything more. Respect Dacre's inexperience."

"Well, how do you manage? Do you cut down your indulgences every year to offset the increased length of your list of necessaries and the increased cost of most of the items?"





"Never!" said I. "Since you press me so hard, I never do. I go out and hustle for more money and think I'm going to get it. It's less trouble."



"Oh, well! Maybe your earning capacity is elastic."

"My hopes are always elastic."

"Folly!" said Dacre. "I see your finish."

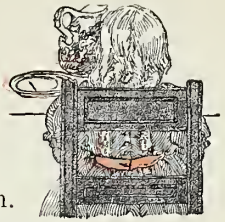
"No, you don't. Does he, Cattlett?"

"I hope not. I guess not. If he does, he sees my finish, too. He underrates the effectiveness of the spur of necessity. But he hasn't got all the facts and can't read as much between your lines as I can. You see, Dacre, the prizes in the great game run to bigger figures than they used to, and it costs more to come in, that's all."



"And in this country," said I, "it's such an infernally open game. No one is out of it who can manage to qualify. No one in this country has got anything, Dacre, that you or I or Cattlett may not aspire to, or might not have aspired to, if we had begun early enough and had had the right kind of a start and the

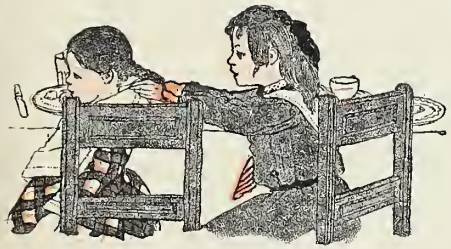




right sort of brains and energies to go on with. I sometimes think the reason why the standard of living is high is that we are all trying to live up to our opportunities, and to start our children—if we have children—in such a fashion that they may live well up to theirs. I dare say we would be happier and less extravagant if we were more rigidly classified and if our opportunities were more restricted."

"Oh, come now," put in Cattlett, "don't kick down the ladder. We can stand the opportunities if only we can manage to live down our comforts. You know about the man who made two blades of grass grow in place of one. I think his services have been overrated. So far as *we* are concerned, *we* don't need any more grass. *Our* cry is, 'Evil unto the day is the sufficiency thereof.' We want some one to relieve us from the awful pangs of comfort. Comfort—competitive comfort—is gnawing at our ribs like the Spartan boy's fox, and we hide it under our coat and try to look happy. If only some one would deprive us of our comforts, making







scrupulously sure to deprive our neighbors of theirs at the same time, we would build more monuments to him than the grateful Carnegie has erected to Tariff. But if our comforts are taken away and our neighbors' comforts are left, it will not help us. If there is to be discrimination, let it be in our favor. Give us that, or else give us a horizontal cut. Find us a boll-weevil that will blast half the budding comforts as they grow, and make them perish. Then the Chicago bank clerk can be happy, though married, and Harvard College can declare cash dividends, and distressed parents will not have to sell their votes to buy their daughters picture-hats."



"Why not unload a few comforts, Cattlett, since they bother you so much?"

"Can't do it, my boy. They're part of the system. It is the aggregation of comforts that constitutes the standard of living. To keep in sight of the standard of living is the price of opportunity—of many opportunities, that is, that you and I value. Living is cheap where opportunities are scarce; living is dear





where opportunities abound. That is to say, the kind of living that enables you to improve the opportunities you value is dear. Of course, I don't mean that you can't live at small cost in a New York tenement-house, but you couldn't give dinner-parties there. Do you suppose you and I would cling to the current comforts of life if there were not something in it besides ease?"



"There certainly isn't much ease in it for us, Cattlett."

"No, there's precious little. Think of the vast luxury of eating in the basement, and never having a table-cloth on your dining-table, and—and—"

"Blacking your own shoes or letting them go bare, and wearing your old clothes, and having no plumber's pipes in the house to get out of order, and—"

"Oh, come, I'd have hot water, anyhow."

"You would? What for?"

"To wash in."

"Wash! Would you wash? Why wash? The greatest of the forbidden luxuries is dirt,





and cleanliness is one of the dearest and most troublesome of all the comforts. I believe you'd want a clean house. That implies the continuous labor of housemaids. Now, housemaids cost money, directly for wages, and indirectly for food and house-rent."

"Well," Cattlett retorted, "what have I been telling you? You can't get away from the standard of comfort without turning hobo. The things you buy with the money you earn are so obviously desirable that you would rather earn the money, if you can, than do without them. What costs? Cabs, opera tickets, theatre tickets, ball-gowns, automobiles, travel, horse-back exercise! To be sure, but all those things the philosopher can brush aside without much of a pang. What he will pay for if he can scrape together the means is light, air, cleanliness, wholesome food, education, the apparatus of a simple hospitality, the privilege of association with the people he wants to see, the chance to whirl in the particular maelstrom that attracts him."







"Go on! go on! Explain now that civilization is nothing more than a development of new wants."

"It may be something more than that, but it is that. It makes a difference, though, what you want."

"You wouldn't say, then, that the man who wants the most things is the most civilized man?"



"As a rule, we don't want things that are entirely out of our reach. It would be a waste of time. The people who want the most things are usually the people who are best qualified to get what they want—that is, the richest people. Do you think the richest people are the most civilized?"

"Not necessarily, of course," I answered. "Some of them are barbarians. But money seems to be, on the whole, the greatest civilizing influence there is."

"How about religion?"

"It is funny about religion. There are all kinds of religion. When you and I say 'religion' we mean Christianity. But there are





several species of Christianity. I think a good grade of Christianity, fostering liberty and altruism, is the most civilizing influence there is. But where you have that you seem bound to have education, and where you have liberty and education you seem bound in the end to have wealth."

"You can have wealth, it seems, without Christianity, but you can't have a sound article of Christianity without eventually having wealth. Is that it?"



"I suspect there's truth in that. A sound article of Christianity makes for liberty and order; industry and education follow, and then, inevitably, wealth. And wealth balloons the standard of living, and the pinch of comfort makes hogs of all of us and drives us so hard that we haven't time to say our prayers."

"Perhaps," said he, "you are going on to compute that the vast increase of wealth will stimulate greed and choke out religion, and then—"

"Why, then, of course, liberty will droop,





envy will increase, the security of property will become impaired—"

"Ha! The sacking of Newport comes in sight, and I shall have a catalogue!"

"But it isn't imminent. It won't come so long as opportunity still invites the mass of us and you and I continue to respond as we do to the pinch of comfort. As long as there are chances enough ahead to keep us moving, I shall not look to see a serious proportion of the population revert to the hobo condition. When you take to the woods and let your children go barefoot, I shall be around for a copy of your catalogue."







A PROPER PLACE FOR GRANDPARENTS

If you get ever so rich, what do you do? Buy a farm somewhere. If you have the root of a good matter in you, you will want to poultice a worn spirit from time to time with the healing airs and the restful scenes of the country. If you get ever so poor, what do you do? Work harder, probably, if you are fit to do anything and can find anything to do. But if you have a spirit of the requisite fibre, and have come to just the requisite degree of impecuniosity, and circumstances and your experience of life favor it, you go and live in the country. You can live very cheaply in the country if you choose, and possess your soul in complete independence, and wear your old clothes with a cheerful spirit. You

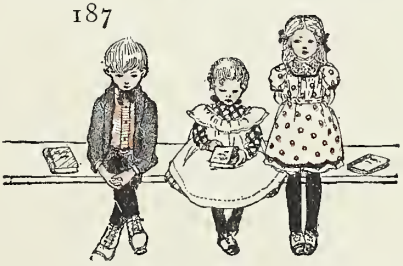




will be quit of a host of obligations to fashion, to society, which may vex and oppress you in town, for the price of superfluities is by far the biggest item in the cost of ordinary living. You will miss opportunities, too, but not all opportunity. You will live face to face with nature. You will be able to say your prayers in peace, and develop the spiritual side of you if you have any, with only the smallest concern about landlords, grocers, or raiment. There are no taxes of any consequence in the country: think of that! The greatest luxury you get there is time, and the next greatest are sights and sounds and smells. If you have thoughts to think, the country gives you a great chance to think them. If you have books to read, you can read a lot of them in the country, even with kerosene at seventeen cents a gallon.



On the other hand, if you have money to spend, what a chance to spend it the country offers you! Gardens, cows, horses, houses, stables, roads, milk at a dollar a gallon if you like, sheep, and dogs, and, most of all, chil-





dren. It is no trouble at all to spend fifty thousand dollars a year on roads alone, if only you start with a fairly sharp land-hunger and push out your borders with due energy. You can get more for your money in roads than in diamonds or pictures, and roads are a permanent investment. They don't burn down; you don't have to keep them insured; you don't have even to keep them clean, for if you build them well, let the weeds grow never so thick on them, the roads will be there still. And once you put your money into them it stays. You can never get it out, nor can any one else. You cannot even be taxed adequately on them, for no assessor presumes to see much value in a road. Indeed, a very large sum of money can be hid in a country place where the assessors won't find it—in water-pipes, drains, and such things that are out of sight, as well as in gardens and plantations. A mushroom-cellar is a good, safe, inconspicuous investment. If elaborately built, it will consume a good deal of money; and who would tax a cellar? Greenhouses, stables,







and residential mansions stand up in plain sight. Go slow in expenditure for such things. It is a bother to keep them up, and there is no special point in having more of them than you want to use; but roads are different.

Each of us sees in the country what he has learned to see. Take a picture of a rolling meadow with sheep in it. The farmer sees in it wool, mutton, and rocks; the painter sees the picture; the pious-minded person sees the Divine touch and feels the Divine presence; the golfer sees a lovely slope, a place for a green, a chance to plant a bunker, and a good outlook for a long drive. He measures in his mind the distance from the sheep to the farthest knoll, and wonders if there is room to avoid the elms. But each observer has doubtless some sense of each aspect which attracts his fellow. Even the sheep will make better mutton for having run in a beautiful field, for it is a great mistake to think that farmers and golfers and sheep are so bent on the main chance as to be unaffected by the loveliness of nature.







It does them good, though sometimes they are not conscious of it at the time.

Another picture, where the road winds in among the trees. It is early fall, for see the leaves! And if a fox should come through the fence at the left, it would probably be in the early morning, and the dew would be heavy on everything in that clear sky. But what delightful board fences, and how sweetly any one of those top boards would crack under a hunter's heels! A board fence is getting to be a rare sight nowadays when the whole country is filling up with wire.



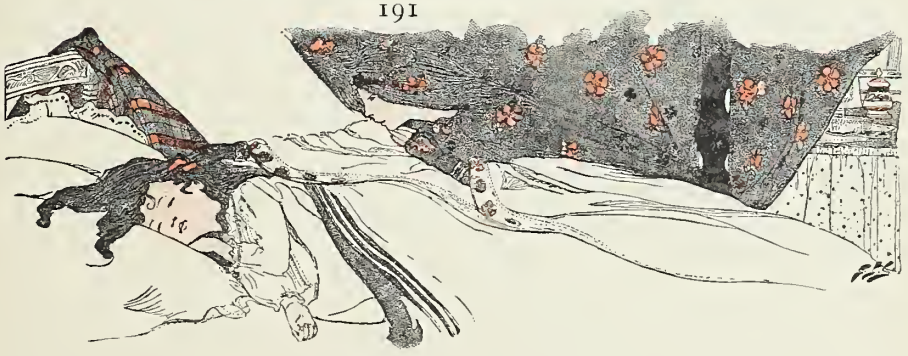
But perhaps such thoughts profane a scene so peaceful. The excuse for them must be that the great problems of country life—as, indeed, of life elsewhere—are occupation and profit, and that sport, where it exists, while it lasts, helps to solve at least one of those problems. But such a sport as hunting in the country is chiefly for the delectation of persons who find, or have found, a fiscal profit elsewhere. Hunting, shooting, polo, even golf, are seldom a natural growth of any







cultivated soil in America. They flourish, where they do flourish, in the rural precincts, to be sure; but the cities, and the more intricate and remunerative industries of urban life, support them. They are suburban rather than strictly rural in their nature; yet they spread wider and grow more important every year, as cities grow and the increase of wealth increases leisure, and as the increasing strain of city life constrains more and more families to consider a country home for at least part of the year a necessity. It is on the refugees from the cities that the problem of country occupations bears hardest. The farmer has no trouble of that sort, especially in the summer, but the migratory city family has to face every spring not only the query, "Where shall we go this year?" but the further one, "And what shall we do when we get there?" Usually the family settles upon some place where there are other city families which will keep it in countenance and help it pass the time. That is a good plan enough, but there are hosts of families that adopt it every year





only for lack of a better one, and who cherish the hope that presently the way will open to them to acquire a permanent abiding-place in the real country, in some region that is not suburban, not citified enough to impair either its charm or its cheapness, not so remote as to be too hard to reach, and not so defiantly rural as to be lonely. In such a place, to have a house so simple as not to be burdensome, a horse possibly, a hired man or part of a hired man, a garden with nasturtiums and hollyhocks in it, a barn, perhaps a cow, and very likely chickens, and to have time to read, time to sew, time to rest and do nothing, and to live independent of all the world—that is many a city family's dream, and once in a while some family develops grit and enterprise enough to realize it. But it takes a good deal of grit and no little aggressive enterprise. It means getting out of the beaten track, ignoring the point of least resistance, and making one's own decisions. It is more a question of mental resources than of money. For to a family that, at a pinch, is sufficient







unto itself; that can find society anywhere where there are human beings, and occupation anywhere where the sun rises and sets; an independent country life is neither very difficult nor very dear. But to live profitably on one's own hook even part of the year takes a good deal of intellectual stamina, and most of us easy-going, imitative, gregarious people are chary of attempting it. We feel the need of a constant incentive to exertion, and commonly find it in summer in the social opportunities and demands that assail us. We will bestir ourselves more, as a rule, to keep our end up with our neighbors than to strengthen our minds or develop our spiritual possibilities.

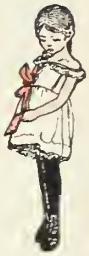


Well, we have to take ourselves in this world as we find ourselves. If a shady road that borders a suitable stream is waiting for us somewhere, and we prefer to wear good clothes on the piazzas of a summer hotel, that's the sort of folks we are, and we must hope that the meals and the society of the hotel are satisfactory. Even though we are





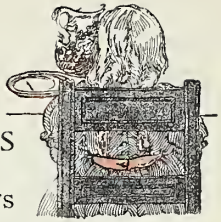
a bit weak in the knees, so that even a reasonable measure of seclusion daunts us, still the country is coming our way, for with trolley lines and rural delivery and increased population, and the constantly increasing overflow from the cities in summer, distance becomes less and less a bugbear, and social privileges are more and more diffused.



The country is a good place to be born in, a good place to die in, a good place to live in at least part of the year. More than half the people in the United States find it a good place to live and work in all the year round. But for them, as has been said, country life has no special problem that is not in the course of solution day by day. They have their work that yields them a living, and the society of their neighbors, and their children as they grow up either settle near them or go to town. But the city man who longs for at least a share of country life for his family and himself must still, as a rule, hold fast to the town. There his business is. On his hold there commonly depend his income and the

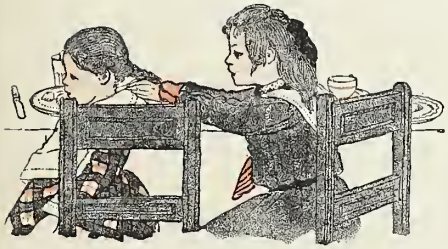


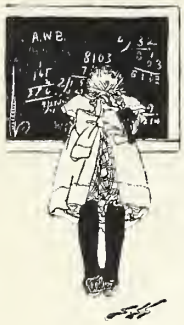




future of his children. Four-fifths of his days between twenty and sixty he must spend in a city, even though he spends half of his nights out of town. What helps solve the problem for him is the fast trains that carry him twenty, thirty, even fifty miles out of town in the late afternoon, and back in the early morning. There is a lot of charming country within practicable reach of the American cities. Besides the men who travel back and forth from ten to forty miles a day, there is the army who go to the country in summer once a week, on Friday, and stay till Monday, and spend, besides, their summer vacations with their families. Every year, as cities grow bigger and trains make better time, more and more diligent Americans lead this laborious life of daily or weekly travel. It is not ideal—it is too hard work for that—but it is better than not to live in the country at all. No doubt as wealth increases in this country, and men grow wiser, it will be more common than it has yet become for successful workers to retire from business when they







can afford to, or at least to work less strenuously and with longer periods of rest. Busy men who can afford it rest a great deal as it is, and to that is chiefly due the rapid development which is everywhere noticeable of the sort of country life which has its roots in town.



To a citizen who has attained to the honorable distinction of being a grandparent a country home is a most enviable luxury. Young parents with new children commonly have their livings to make and their children to educate, and have to stick pretty close to town and keep hard at those engrossing duties. But grandparents ought to have money laid up, time to spare, and places in the country where their grandchildren can come at any time in the year and live with them. The irresponsible indulgence of young children to which grandparents are so addicted can be carried on to the very best advantage in the country. Grandparents should have gardens where babies can pick flowers without fear of discipline. They should keep creditable cows,





and sagacious hired men who like children, and tame horses that it is safe to drive, and ponies of assorted ages and different degrees of spirit. It is well for them, too, to live within convenient distance of streams that drift lazily through the landscape with no mosquitoes near them, and with trees proper to sit under or row past. Such streams, duly bordered with umbrageous vegetation, are convenient for the older grandchildren during the courtship period. The young can't provide such an environment for themselves. Their parents — unless they are rich — commonly have to spend most of their money for rent, food, clothes, and education, and are prone to skimp when it comes to rural expenditures. But to have grandparents with right ideas about living and proper country places to live in is immensely advantageous to grandchildren, vastly convenient for parents, and as remunerative to the grandparents themselves as anything in the market.



But, of course, grandparents, to be satisfactory and thoroughly useful in their vocation,





must be of the right sort—competent without being fidgety, indulgent—yes, over-indulgent—without being foolish enough to impair the confidence of parents, and such respecters of human liberty as to hold that what a child wants to do is the best thing for that child to do, provided there is no sound reason to the contrary. Grandparents with real farms are best—farms where hens lay under barns and in hay-mows in the spring, and where protesting pigs meet a tragic doom in the early winter, and where apples grow profusely, and cider-casks stand in rows in November with the bungs out and straws handy.



And, of course, there ought to be a cornfield, and pumpkins, and mice and moles under the corn-shocks as they stand in the field in the fall, and terriers to hunt them when the cornstalks are borne away to the barn. All this, to be sure, has to do with real farming, whereas it has been a more artificial and supplementary sort of country life that we have been considering. But, after all, why shouldn't grandparents be real farmers? When it comes





to that, farmers in America have proved themselves far and away the most successful grandparents the country has produced. It has been the rule that the vigorous men who have forged ahead in the towns have come from the country. Perhaps it is not the rule now in quite so striking a measure, but it is the rule still. In the slower life of the country the energy seems ever to be accumulating which feeds the bustle and the progress of the driving cities. In the town is the brilliant flame, but the wick is fed by the country. It is because it is so well understood that country air and sights and all the processes of country life are necessary to maintain the vigor of family stocks that we see this constant reaching-out of the dwellers in towns for all of the country that they can get. It is going on more and more, urged by increasing need as city life grows more and more artificial, and aided by the wonderful development of cheap and rapid transportation. The rich in America are all the time acquiring and developing great country es-







tates; the merely well-to-do follow a like impulse in a more modest way; poorer people swell the vast army of summer-boarders; and in the great towns, families too poor to get their children out of town in summer are helped to send them, sometimes hundreds of miles, to volunteer grandparents who have fields and farm-houses and kind hearts. And so, while the country comes to town as much as ever, the town each year gets back to the country more generally than ever before. It is a most important interchange—good for the country and vitally necessary for the towns. It is an easy matter, and quickly done, to get the hay-seed out of the locks of any likely lad, but the locks that never had any hay-seed in them are apt to drop out over-soon.



Country development may be incomplete, but city development tends to be narrow, and it is a far easier matter to expand and refine the one than to supply the deficiencies of the other.





WINTER IN THE COUNTRY



In the summer the country gets due attention from the city people, but the country winters still belong almost altogether to the various folk who really live in the country—the farmers, villagers, and to some extent, of course, the suburbanites.

Our country clubs have skating-ponds and toboggan-slides, and a few enterprising people rush out of town, when they get a chance, and use them. When I lived in the country we skated on shallows on the edge of the lake, or up the brooks to the swamps that fed them, and the winter ponds that bordered the swamps. There were musk-rats under the ice in the swamps and the swamp-ponds; and musk-rats under the ice make mighty interesting skating for the boy on top. And the





streams—how fascinating it was to follow them up after winter had taken hard hold of them! Where the ice in a brook is good, it is good, and where it is bad there is always the excited anticipation of a reach of particularly good ice, or maybe a flooded meadow, a little way farther up.

Unless you really live in the country you will miss the great snow-storms; and it is a pity to go through life without knowledge of them. Whittier's "Snow-Bound" is the fruit of one of them. In Blackmore's *Lorna Doone* there is an admirable record of another which is bound to linger long in any mind that takes it in. Hawthorne, too, saw snow-storms and made record of them. The country values its winter excitements, for they are somewhat rare, and a great snow-storm is the chief of them. There are two notable kinds—the blizzard that comes with wind and cold, when the fine snow drifts furiously, and the quiet storm when the flakes are often clumps of exquisite crystals, and fall fast and silently, blanketing the landscape, and adorning



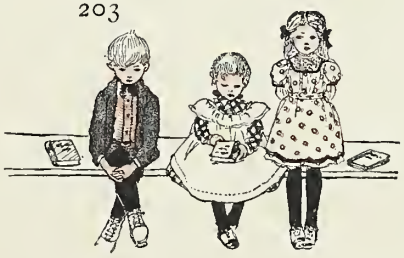


the trees with a decoration of astonishing beauty.

It begins to snow, say, about noon, and snows diligently, with no stops for rest. By five o'clock the snow-plough is out, and there is shovelling of paths to the barn and the road and wherever paths are necessary. Instead of stopping at sundown, it buckles to and snows harder Before you go to bed it is eighteen inches deep on a level. It becomes interesting. You begin to speculate as to when it will stop.



The first thing in the morning you look out of the window and see—nothing but snow; snow everywhere, on the ground, on the trees, covering the handle of the pump out of sight, making mere mounds of the smaller shrubs, bending down the limbs of the tall evergreens until they look like Chinese pagodas. No paths anywhere — mere slight depressions where the paths were last night. And the road as you see it from the window is still smooth and white from fence to fence. No sleigh track yet; no one has got through. Here





is delightful excitement for children, and occupation and more or less exhilaration for every one. The first track is made by the hired man wading through the snow to the barn. Sausages and buckwheat-cakes for breakfast on such a morning, and then path-finding, road-breaking, and shovelling all the rest of the morning, and all day long if the storm keeps on.



After it has snowed three feet on a level the storm begins to be a phenomenon, and there is hourly speculation as to whether it will break a record, and how much it will obstruct the railroads, and when the newspapers will come and tell all about it. For the time being it is the only topic. Presently the road-breakers come down the road, driving four or six wallowing horses before a lumber-sleigh, and once the snow stops falling communication is soon resumed. But there are great heaps of snow, the result of shovelling, which the children burrow into and excavate for snow-houses, and these last until the next big thaw.





The fine snow driven hard and fast by a bitter north wind is just as interesting, though not so beautiful, because it does not stay on the trees. That combination makes drifts and packs tight, and means more hard work and much longer interruption of communication. A winter evening by a bright fire is better than ever when such a storm is raging outside, and when it blows and snows itself out by daylight, and the sun rises clear on a sparkling landscape, the sight of that, and to breathe the sharp, clean air, are something to live for and remember. Very beautiful, too, in their results, are the storms that coat the limbs of the trees and shrubs with ice that glitters wonderfully in the sunlight, and gives a fairy-palace effect to everything in sight. But the ice-storms, besides being harmful to the trees, have not the spiritual effect that the great, silent snow-storms have. Death itself is not more tranquil than the noiseless fall of the flakes, and the great snow blanket, soft and spotless, is the most peaceful thing to look at in nature. It shuts out







all ugliness, smooths all rough places, softens all harsh angles. The most material mind can hardly help being soothed and rested by it, and the contemplative spirit sees earth, for once, sweet, pure, and millennial.

The pictures of nature that most of us have most in our minds were stored there not with intention prepense, but because they imposed themselves on our attention. The snow and the snow pictures are an unavoidable part of the Northern country-dweller's winter environment, and whether he has little or much of the painter's appreciation of landscape, they do ordinarily take a hold on his mind. He may not be able to discourse to edification about his winters, as Mr. Kipling did about snowy Brattleboro, but the crispness of the snow and the creak of the runners on cold days penetrate his consciousness, too. The pictures of landscape that stick most ineffaceably in our minds are those that took hold there when we were children. They become part of our capital stock of impressions, which we add to as long as our





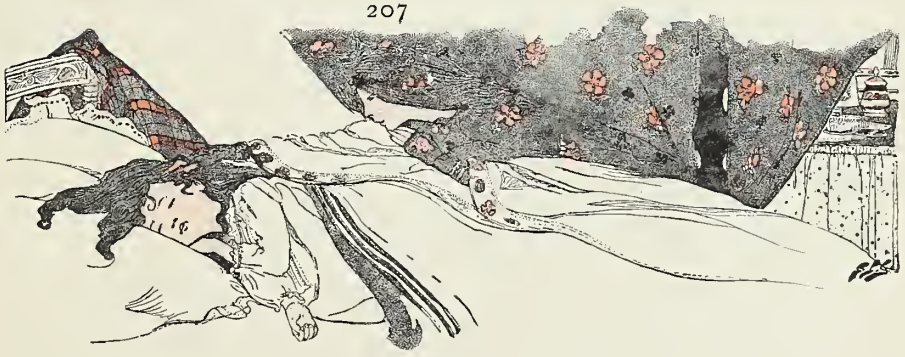


capacity for receiving visual impressions lasts.



Human interests add very much to the attractions of the country in winter, and here in the East I suppose country life in winter is somewhat less rich in human interest, and consequently less brisk, than it was fifty years ago. All districts that are near considerable cities have increased in population, but it is, in winter at least, a village population. The true rural districts have everywhere suffered from the superior attractions of the towns, and that is natural. Since agricultural machinery has come to abound, fewer hands can do the work of a farm, and the surplus hands go elsewhere to other tasks. Would it pay now, do you suppose, to pile up the stone walls that are the familiar field boundaries all over New England? I suppose not. One of the charms of New England farms as playthings is that so much work has been done on them and so little remains to be done that is commercially expedient.

The great, steady winter jobs on an Ameri-





can farm in the North nowadays are feeding the stock and keeping warm. And keeping warm nowadays means hauling coal. When I lived in the country it meant cutting wood. It meant, for our large family, constant teaming day after day from the woods to the wood-yard, and a wood-pile that must have covered quarter of an acre. It meant, towards spring, the coming of men with a horse-power and buzz-saw to cut firewood, and that was almost as interesting an operation as thrashing. It meant also a pretty constant procession past the front door of sleighs loaded with wood on their way to market, and a boy could hitch a hand-sleigh on behind any of them and ride two or three miles down the road, returning at a better pace behind an empty one.



There were other stirring days when the lake had frozen hard and the ice-house was filled, involving ice-cutting, and more teaming, and more precarious hitching on behind loads and going back in empties. And early in the winter there was the momentous and





gory killing of pigs. Oh, that was indeed a stirring time! They kill a pig every second, no doubt, in Chicago nowadays, but that is mere mechanical routine with no quality of sport in it. When we killed, there was a fire where the brook ran through the big barnyard, and kettles hung over it from a pole, and water boiled in them. From time to time there were the horrifying shrieks of the murdered swine, which were pretty blood-curdling, though interesting as incidents. There were bladders to blow up, too; there was at last the row of pigs hanging stark, clean, and handsome in the crisp twilight; and following that, the cutting-up, the salting-down of pork, the curing and smoking of hams, the making of sausages, head-cheese, and souse, and, at leisure, the eating of them.



There was nothing so very slow about the country winter in days as late as the civil war. I suppose soap-making as a domestic industry is as dead as household spinning. In those times of wood-fires and wood-ashes all self-respecting families made soap. Our family





had an outstanding kitchen expressly for that use, with a big, cistern-like hogshead behind it in which ashes were leached, and convenient tubs for holding the soft soap. A very handsome substance is soft soap of the proper consistency and complexion, and a pleasing exercise it used to be for the young to stir it with a stick and watch its undulations. All the superfluous fat of meat from our kitchen was eventually turned into soft soap in those near-by old times.

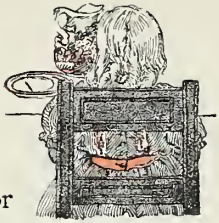


They really were better times to winter in the country than these days of ready-made and coal-oil incubation. Is an incubator interesting? Oh yes, commercially. Anything that makes money is interesting. But there is a personal charm about hens that no incubator can rival. The wiles of hens in secreting eggs, the finding of nests, and the cautious, light-fingered speculation as to the age and condition of the eggs in them, used to help out the country winters.



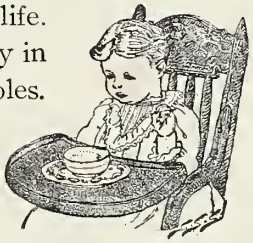
We had, besides the stable, a big farm-barn, built to hold a lot of hay, and standing

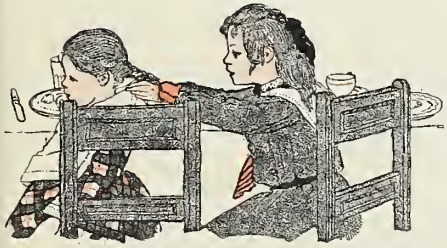


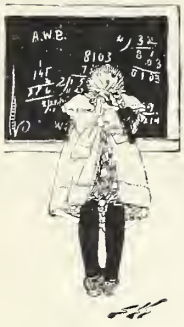


at a convenient height from the ground for perverse hens to lay under, and for other young bipeds to crawl under in search of eggs. Such a barn is a very desirable adjunct to winter country life. This one had a frame of great oak beams and an extension of connecting sheds, and when all its upper part had been filled with hay, the hay-mows were the finest places imaginable to play in in winter. All the various hide-and-seek games could be played to advantage in connection with them, and you could make dens and burrows in them where apples could be stored and suitable books deposited for consideration at times when for any reason it was prudent or convenient for one to stay away from the house.

And of course the barn, being a farm-barn, was duly furnished with cows, and had a big straw-stack in the barn-yard. Cows are excellent society in winter, if you see enough of them to give them a place in your daily life. All animals help out socially in the country in winter, and so may some of the vegetables.







THE LUXURY OF CHILDREN

For my part, I used to find appreciable social advantages in the company of apples. A peck or two, or even a barrel or two, of apples from the grocer's can hardly be considered company, but thirty or forty barrels of various apples standing back in the cellar, with movable covers convenient for an inspector with pockets, are a different matter. They constitute a collection delightful to the eye, stimulating to the imagination, and affording food for observation, reflection, and comparison, as well as convenient physical refreshment. Doughnuts have consoling characteristics, especially when taken with cider on a winter evening, but I never found in them the same sort of companionship that there was in apples. Perhaps they came too few in a batch, or lasted too short a time, or were all too much alike.



But, after all, the best and most companionable property of all that we had was the library. That was rather remarkable, not because it was so very big or so very valuable, but because of its scope and flavor. There





were three or four thousand books in it, shelved almost from floor to ceiling, ranging from folios up to duodecimos, and from black letter up to the types of Franklin Square. Very few of the books were of later date than Macaulay's History, but it was a good, old-fashioned collection, gathered at his leisure by a lover of good books, from book-stalls and importers' counters. It held a deal of good reading and some bad; it was seasoned and homely and inspiring, and if it did not include the record of all human knowledge, it at least contained clews to pretty much all that was known up to the middle of the nineteenth century, and could put you in touch with all the more notable human beings in the world's history.



To sit in that library with a book, and look out from time to time across the snow to the ice-bound lake, or to sit there of a winter evening before the open wood fire with good old books all about, was a detail of human experience that I do not often see bettered in cities. If you have once got used to the





town and its various stimulations, you may feel the need of reverting to it from time to time, even if it doesn't claim you altogether. But don't imagine that you really know the country until you have tried it, and tried it intelligently, in winter, when the flies are gone and the mosquitoes are all dead, and the great business of life is just to live and invite your soul.



THE END



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